

Sudan closes Saudi newspaper office

KHARTOUM (AP) — Sudan's military government shut down the Khartoum office of a leading Saudi Arabian newspaper for alleged non-journalistic political activity, the government said Saturday. An Information Ministry statement quoted in the weekly government newspaper Darfur Al Gadida was Sudan's first acknowledgment of the action already reported by the Saudi paper, Al Sharq Al Awsat. The statement said authorities seized with the newspaper's Khartoum reporter "documents and leaflets that revealed his connection with a sectarian leader and his sides." It gave no names. Al Sharq Al Awsat identified the reporter as Mohammad Abdul Sayed and said Sudanese intelligence agents arrested him. The closure appeared rooted in severe diplomatic and political strains between Sudan and Saudi Arabia since Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Saudi Arabia resented Khartoum's support of Iraq and stopped all financial aid and oil supplies to Sudan. Al Sharq Al Awsat, published in Saudi Arabia and London, said the closure took effect at the end of January. The newspaper quoted a Sudanese official as saying in a letter to Mr. Abdul Sayed "grossly exceeded press ethics." He will remain in custody pending "administrative and judiciary decisions," the letter said.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جورديان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالإنجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية «الراي»

UAE vows to regain Gulf islands

ABU DHABI (R) — President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan said Saturday the United Arab Emirates (UAE) would make every effort to regain three Gulf islands from Iran. Friendly ties and cooperation between the two states depended on Iran taking steps to resolve the matter, he said in a speech to the Federal National Council read by his son, Deputy Prime Minister Sheikh Sultan. Iran's continued occupation of Abu Musa and the Greater and Lesser Tunb was a threat to regional stability and a "violation of its declared desire to develop ties," Sheikh Zayed said. Iran has virtually annexed Abu Musa, jointly controlled by the two countries since 1971. The Tunbs were occupied by Iran under the late Shah in the same year. Iran told the UAE and its Gulf Arab allies in December they would have to "cross a sea of blood" to get to the strategic islands. The council's debates are expected to focus on post-Gulf war security issues, the dispute with Iran and cutting back on a foreign workforce which makes up more than 70 per cent of the country's two million population, veteran member Abdullah Al Muhairby told Reuters earlier. Mr. Muhairby was elected speaker later Saturday, the UAE's news agency WAM said.

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Cabinet holds meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet Saturday held a meeting under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Zeid Ben Shaker and approved a new administrative system within the Ministry of Health aiming to implement administrative reforms in the ministry. The system, prepared by the ministry in cooperation with the Public Administration Institute and the Civil Service Commission, entails decentralising the health departments in the Kingdom. It divides the Kingdom into three regions and gives special prominence to improving the ministry's services. The Cabinet also approved Jordan's joining an organisation for protecting plants, made up of seventeen countries from the Near East.

Husseini seeks Romanian help

BUCHAREST (R) — A senior Palestinian official asked Romania Saturday to mediate in the expansion crisis with Israel which has stalled the Middle East peace talks. Faisal Al Hussein, adviser to the Palestinian delegation in the peace talks, made the plea in Bucharest meetings with President Ion Iliescu and Foreign Minister Theodor Melescanu. The request was apparently part of a broader diplomatic offensive by the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). "I pointed out the role which Romania could play, much evident, to promote the peace process," Mr. Hussein told Romanian radio after his Bucharest discussions. "We express our hope Romania will intervene to stop the (Israeli) policy of expulsion and to remove the obstacles which Israel keeps placing in the way of the peace process," he said.

Israeli protests Ghali-PLO meeting

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel has protested to the United Nations at Secretary-General Boutros Ghali discussing Middle East peace talks with a Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) representative, Israel Radio said on Saturday. The radio said Israel's ambassador to the U.N., Gad Yacobi, sent Dr. Ghali a message saying he was astonished he had met PLO observer Nasser Al Kidwa rather than Palestinian negotiators to the talks. A foreign ministry spokesman said he did not know of the protest.

Shoval hits Labour

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel's outgoing ambassador to Washington said Saturday he was unhappy representing the Labour-led government because he did not share its views. Zalman Shoval, who was appointed by the previous government of the right-wing Likud, will be replaced next week by Itamar Rabinovich, a professor who heads Israel's delegation to peace negotiations with Syria. "In all, I am not happy with this government and I do not especially desire to represent it... this is not exactly the government I would want to be identified with for the long term," Mr. Shoval told army radio.

Militants declare war on TV Bible film

SRINAGAR, India (R) — Muslim militants in India's Jammu and Kashmir state said Saturday they had declared war on a television serial because it depicts characters from the Bible. They charged that "Stories from the Bible," shown on Sundays by state-run Doordarshan television, was blasphemous to Islam. "All prophets including Jesus Christ and Moses are held in equal reverence by the Muslims and no mortal can play their character," the underground Islamic group al-Badr Mujahideen, said in a statement.

Israeli soldiers kill six Gazans in two days

OCCUPIED GAZA STRIP (Agencies) — Israeli troops shot dead a Palestinian boy in the occupied Gaza Strip on Saturday, bringing to six the number of Gazans killed in two days of clashes, the Israeli army said. Soldiers also shot and wounded 27 Palestinians in demonstrations throughout the Gaza Strip Saturday, Palestinian sources said. Troops shot dead Ashraf Al Daaou early Saturday in Jabalya refugee camp while he was attending a wake for one of the five Palestinians killed Friday, witnesses said. Mourners were angered when Israeli troops disturbed their procession and began stoning the forces, witnesses said. The troops opened fire, killing Daaou. The army said soldiers killed the boy when they fired on demonstrators who threw stone blocks and iron pipes and en-

dangered their lives. One paramilitary border policeman was wounded, the army said. The squalid Strip where 750,000 Palestinians live erupted in violence after Israel shot dead three Palestinians it claimed were armed Friday. Soldiers killed two other Palestinians — one of them a 14-year-old boy — in demonstrations that followed. The army confined about 120,000 residents of Nuseirat, Bureij and Jabalya refugee camps in Gaza to their homes Saturday. But protesters defied the curfews to confront soldiers. Most of those wounded were in Jabalya. Majdi Arabid, a cameraman for the Worldwide Television News (WTN) was shot in the leg and lightly wounded while filming the clashes in Jabalya. Israelis have killed 1,009 Palestinians since the start of an uprising against Israeli occupa-

tion in December 1987. Tensions in the Gaza Strip were heightened by Israel's Dec. 17 expulsion of 415 Palestinians accused of links to Islamic fundamentalist groups. Many were residents of the Strip. The weekend's bloodshed was the worst since Dec. 19, when six Palestinians died in clashes with the army followed the Dec. 17 expulsions. Arab League Secretary-General Esmat Abdul Meguid denounced the killing of Palestinians by Israeli troops in the occupied territories, saying such acts would only fuel tension in the region. "I strongly condemn these Israeli practices... which further complicate the situation... such acts must stop because their continuation will increase tension in the region," Dr. Abdul Meguid told reporters.

PLO says Baghdad now endorses peace process

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraq, which had rejected the Middle East peace process, has changed its policy and now endorses Palestinian talks with the Israelis, the Palestinian ambassador said Saturday. "Now, as an Iraqi leadership they will accept what the Palestinian leadership accepts and this is a positive change, a great positive change," Ambassador Azam Al Ahmad told the Associated Press in an interview. "I think it will help them in the dialogue with the West," he said. "Logically, it must help them... the West is mistaken if they think Iraq doesn't want relations with the West." Mr. Ahmad, a veteran diplomat here, said Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and other Iraqi officials made the new Iraqi position explicit in talks with Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat, who visited this week. Mr. Arafat told reporters

Wednesday that in spite of the lack of progress in talks so far, the Iraqi leader "encouraged us to continue in our attempts to achieve real peace." Ambassador Ahmad elaborated on that statement, but Iraqi officials have not been available to answer reporters' questions about Iraq's position on the peace process. Mr. Ahmad said the change in Iraq's position had been gradual and came as no surprise, as Baghdad sought to end its international isolation and open a dialogue with the West. Endorsing the peace process, he said, is part of Iraq's strategy. "It is a part of the dialogue which they asked for with the international community," he said. Iraq, he said, now understands the events and changes in the world in the past three years "and from this point of view they are

Algeria's former top general on trial

ALGIERS (R) — Algeria's former top military man, retired General Mostefa Beloucif, went on trial Saturday on corruption charges that carry a possible death sentence. The official news agency APS said Gen. Beloucif, a close associate and longtime friend of former President Chadli Benjedid, was being tried in Blida military court on charges of misappropriation and misuse of state funds. The charges relate to a period between 1981 and 1986 with Mr. Benjedid as both president and defence minister. Newspapers said Mr. Benjedid could be called as a witness. A report published last year said 38.7 million French francs (\$86.9 million at current exchange rates) was involved plus 10 million dinars (\$475,000) and Italian, Japanese and U.S. currency. The report said Gen. Beloucif had luxury villas in Algeria, a yacht and spent eight million francs (\$1.4 million) furnishing a Paris apartment. State radio said he faced a possible death sentence. Military courts in Algeria are closed to foreign journalists but Algerian reporters said the court rejected a prosecution request to hold the trial behind closed doors. Independent newspapers said the trial was eagerly awaited by Algerians, angered by reports of corruption and vast wealth at most of the country's 26 million people struggle to survive. "This trial also confirms a certain determination displayed by the public authorities to turn all the light on corruption," said L'Opinion newspaper. Gen. Beloucif, granted bail by a civilian court in November 1990, was ordered detained last May by the military court. APS said Colonel Fekir Mohammad Hebr, former planning and budget director, and Tidjani Abdul Kader, formerly in charge of general administration at the presidency, also were ordered detained. The three faced conspiracy charges, it said. They were held less than a week after the newspaper Al Watan made public a 1989 report by five senior generals on mismanagement or misuse of more than 37 million French francs (almost \$87 million). One of the generals who wrote the report was Khaled Nezzar, now defence minister and a member of Algeria's five-man presidency. Lawyers, before the trial opened, indicated Gen. Beloucif would focus his defence on his carrying out Mr. Benjedid's orders. Gen. Beloucif was secretary-general at the Defence Ministry but Mr. Benjedid sacked him in the mid-1980s. The 1989 investigation was completed as Mr. Benjedid was re-elected president for a third term.

Jordan seeks strong ties with ex-Soviet republics

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Saturday voiced Jordan's desire to maintain strong ties and cooperation in various fields with the newly independent Islamic republics of the former Soviet Union. The King also voiced Jordan's readiness to provide these republics with Jordanian expertise wherever possible. He was addressing a Jordanian delegation due to fly to Moscow Monday on a visit to the Russian Federation and the independent republics. The meeting was attended by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, Royal Court Chief Khalid Karaki and Chief Chamberlain Prince Raad Ben Zeid, who is leading the delegation. The King voiced his delight at the high level of the delegation, which includes a group of people representing various Jordanian sectors. The King expressed pride in and satisfaction with the response of the leaders of the republics towards Jordan's bid to bolster relations. He said Jordan should pursue all efforts towards strengthening its ties and cooperation with the Islamic republics based on mutual confidence and respect. King Hussein expressed Jordan's readiness to welcome leaders from the Islamic republics, "with which Jordan is linked

through the Islamic faith and culture." The delegation groups prominent figures from the religious, cultural, scientific, educational, economic and political sectors.



His Majesty King Hussein Saturday meets with a high-level delegation which leaves Monday on a visit to the Russian Federation and the independent Islamic republics of the former Soviet Union (Petra photo)



Saadeddin Al Alami

Mufti of Jerusalem dies at 82

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — Saadeddin Jalaluddin Al Alami, the mufti of Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank who led the defence of the city's Islamic holy sites, died Saturday at 82. He died of heart failure after a long illness, said his son and doctor, Ahmad Al Alami. Sheikh Alami helped establish the Islamic High Council following Israel's occupation of Arab East Jerusalem in 1967. The council led the political battle to protect holy sites in the third holiest city in Islam from Israeli encroachment. Sheikh Alami was appointed mufti of Jerusalem and the West Bank by Jordan in 1952. The position of mufti, traditionally a state official who administers Islamic justice, gained political significance in Jerusalem following the advent of Zionism at the end of the last century. Sheikh Alami, who was born in Jerusalem, is survived by his wife, Munira Al Khakdi Al Alami, 55, and three sons and four daughters.

Arafat asks Egypt to help return home of all evictees

Rabin says peace talks were faltering before Dec. 17; Abdul Meguid calls on Security Council for next step

Combined agency dispatches

PALESTINE LEADER Yasser Arafat has urged Egypt to seek a speedy return of the remaining 396 Palestinians expelled by Israel to South Lebanon, Arab diplomats said Saturday. Mr. Arafat, in talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, asked Egypt to use its influence to make Israel comply with U.N. Resolution 799, which ordered Israel to let the Palestinians expelled seven weeks ago return home immediately. "Discussions focused on the process of solving the crisis through the return of all the (expellees) ... on the mechanism of applying 799, whether in one phase or two phases," Saeed Kamal, the PLO ambassador to Egypt, told Reuters. "We demanded assurances that all the (expellees) will be returned home in a short period in order to allow the peace talks to resume," said Mr. Kamal, who attended the Friday night talks. Egypt, the only Arab country to have signed a peace treaty with Israel, has been involved in intensive diplomatic talks with Israel, the United States and the United Nations to resolve the crisis. Mr. Arafat was holding talks with Foreign Minister Amr Musa later concerning the evictees and flagging Middle East peace talks. The Arab diplomats said Mr. Arafat and Mr. Mubarak discussed diplomatic ways to enforce Resolution 799 without resorting to the Security Council to force Israel to comply. Allowing 101 of the expellees to return to their homes was part of a U.S.-Israeli deal announced on Monday. One aim of the deal, which was rejected by the Palestinians who want all to go home or none, was to undercut the move



Yasser Arafat

to impose sanctions on Israel. Mr. Kamal said the "mechanism and the time" for repatriating the evictees was "left in the hands of the negotiators" — Egypt and the United States — but that there was a common agreement that the evictees must go back in a short period. Other diplomatic sources said Egypt, the United States and the Palestinians were aiming for a solution before April to give the 15-month-old peace negotiations a chance to take off again after a long recess. The sources said U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, due to visit Israel and Arab countries from Feb. 17 to 24, wanted to defuse the crisis and revive the stalled talks. The United States — sponsoring the negotiations involving Israel and Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and the Palestinians — has postponed multilateral talks originally set for next week and suggested bilateral talks resume only in mid-April. Palestinian peace negotiators have said they will not take part

in the talks with Israel until all the evictees go back to the Israeli-occupied territories. Mr. Musa said Cairo and Washington were working hard to reach an agreement with Israel to return all the evictees within weeks and to reactivate the peace process. He said Israel's offer to return 101 and cut exile terms of the rest was "a step in the right direction which has to be followed immediately by other steps to ensure the full return of all (expellees)." Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has said the peace talks flagged before the expulsions and the delay caused by the banishment was a timely recess. "I felt in the last stages that the (peace) negotiations as they were were beginning to blur. There was no movement," Mr. Rabin said in an interview with Israel Television Friday night. "I think the time out will give us an opportunity... together with the Americans and other elements... to learn more about the problem, in order to really begin negotiations," he said. Mr. Rabin, criticised in Israel for making the compromise offer, said the Arabs were upset because they had no part in formulating the proposal. "They say, 'Look here, the Israelis and the Americans have come to an understanding... without our participation in that understanding,'" Mr. Rabin said. In Marj Al Zohour, Lebanon, the Palestinian evictees said U.S. efforts to rescue the peace talks would bear fruit only if Israel allowed them all to return home. "We think that Christopher's visit will not lead to any results

Somali clans clash; Marines turn buffer

MOGADISHU (AP) — Somali clans clashed Saturday with rifles, grenades, sticks and stones for a second day along the contested "green line" dividing Mogadishu into rival warlord's territories. More than 100 U.S. Marines positioned themselves directly between several hundred shouting, rock-throwing Somalis from the two factions. None of the attacks were directed at the Marines and they held their fire. "The only thing we're trying to do here is keep them from killing each other," said the Marine commander on the scene, Lieutenant-Colonel Ed Lesno-

wicz. "So far we've been able to keep the groups out of a major confrontation." Col. Lesnowicz reported the Marines evacuated eight Somalis to hospitals with gunshot and grenade wounds. They included a mortally wounded 13-year-old boy who was dumped on the Marine lines after grenade fragments ripped through his head. The Marines suffered no casualties, but some were tense as the fighting virtually encircled them. "Everybody's frightened," said



An American Marine films food distribution in Mogadishu (AFP photo)

30 Jordanian deputies urge Clinton to free Larouche

AMMAN (AP) — Thirty Jordanian lawmakers Saturday urged President Bill Clinton to free former fringe presidential candidate Lyndon Larouche, who is serving a 15-year sentence for mail fraud. In a letter to the U.S. president, legislators also asked for Mr. Clinton's "direct intervention to...end the political persecution against Larouche's movement." "It is our understanding that throughout his public life Larouche has been a defender of the right to sovereign development of all nations on the planet and of the inalienable rights of all men and women," said the letter, a copy of which was made available to the Associated Press. "For these reasons, Mr. President, we ask you to take prompt and resolute action to repair this injustice by immediately freeing Lyndon Larouche," the letter added. The one-page letter was signed by 30 lawmakers, including members of the fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood, the largest single bloc in Jordan's 80-man Cham-

ber of Deputies with 22 seats. The move was believed to be prompted by Leith Shubeilat, a prominent human rights activist and a popular parliamentarian. Mr. Shubeilat is a close friend of Mr. Larouche. In the letter, lawmakers said Mr. Larouche, "has been unjustly incarcerated as a political prisoner in a federal prison in Rochester, Minnesota. This was the result of a politically motivated, rushed trial... that trampled upon the most basic rights of the defendant and which concluded by imposing a cruel sentence." Mr. Larouche, 69, was sentenced to a 15-year prison term after he was convicted in federal court of mail fraud in 1989. A political extremist, he called for the quarantine of all AIDS victims, claimed Britain's Queen Elizabeth II was a drug dealer and advocated the colonisation of Mars. He ran for the presidency of the United States several times, the last of which was in 1989, getting just 25,000 votes.

Clinton to cut luxuries — starting at White House

WASHINGTON (R) — President Bill Clinton announced plans Saturday to cut "needless luxuries" in government, starting with payrolls, perquisites and privileges at the White House, in an effort to begin reducing the U.S. budget deficit. "We've got to control the cost of government, starting with my own people," Mr. Clinton said in his first live presidential radio address, a seven-minute speech modelled on the radio speeches Ronald Reagan once used to castigate big government. In the 1992 campaign, Mr. Clinton said he would reduce the White House staff by 25 per cent. "I'll be making big cuts in the White House staff, cutting payrolls and perks and privileges," Mr. Clinton said. "I want to set an example so that I can take the fight to the rest of the government to eliminate unnecessary commissions, to reduce the federal payroll, to get rid of needless luxuries like posh dining rooms," he said. An announcement on the details of the cuts at the White House could come early next

week. There was speculation that some of the reductions would hit career clerical workers who would be replaced by unpaid volunteers. Mr. Clinton, who put high-powered lobbyists Ron Brown and Mickey Kantor in his cabinet as commerce secretary and U.S. trade representative respectively, vowed to "take on the lobbyists for the special interest that have grown used to getting special favours." Mr. Clinton was setting the stage for a Feb. 17 speech to Congress in which he will outline the painful mix of higher taxes and spending cuts he proposes to spark steady, long-term economic growth and also reduce the budget deficit. He said the government is spending about \$1.20 for every dollar it receives in taxes. "Our goal was to make the department more efficient, more responsible and more directed, particularly at the agenda of the new administration," said Depu-

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Hassan II says he would retire before senility

RABAT (R) — In a book published Friday King Hassan of Morocco, 63, said he would retire and hand over power to a successor before he went senile.

"Today I am in a hurry because I think there comes a time when one must not fall into senile decay and drag one's country after one," he told the French journalist Eric Laurent in the book *Le Memoire d'un Roi* (The Memory of a King).

"When one reaches a certain age one must hand over... people should have the possibility of retiring," he said in the 304-page book, written in the form of questions and answers based on a series of interviews last August.

"After 45 years one has the feeling one is getting old. You know power is like a grindstone. If you touch it lightly it sharpens, otherwise if you press too hard it flattens you."

Asked if he wanted to finish his days in office he replied: "No, if I had the choice and if God wills it."

Under the constitution the king's successor is his elder son, Crown Prince Sidi Mohammed, 29, currently visiting France. His younger son, Prince Moulay Rachid, will be 22 in June.

But the king hinted that his successor did not have to be the crown prince.

"Of course a crown prince has to be named, in case there is a sudden disappearance. There must be no vacuum. But the decision must be ratified by a beyia (the traditional act of allegiance) as may father did when he

made me crown prince. The right of primogeniture should not be inevitable."

He said it was a very important problem which "preoccupies me enormously, so much so that I propose writing a decree."

He said the marriages of future princes would be codified "because I want to ban once and for all for everyone a (royal) marriage with a foreigner, whether an Arab or a Muslim."

The king recalled his dealings with numerous heads of state he has met during his 32-year reign.

"For (Libyan leader Muammar) Qadhafi anyone installed on a throne was inevitably a traitor and until the 1980s he was 'completely unpredictable and uncontrollable. But despite everything he has a quality: When he gives his word he really keeps it," he said.

The king said Colonel Qadhafi had tried several times to overthrow him and he had also tried to oust the Libyan leader. "For my part the attempts were not so frequent..." He gave no details.

He said Ahmad Ben Bella, Algeria's first president, was "an irascible person extremist in language" and after a brief war over their disputed border in 1963 he refused to speak to him. "If I met him tomorrow I would refuse to shake his hand."

His successor, Houari Boumedienne, was "very reserved, suspicious, introverted, relating everything to himself, rarely relaxing. But over the years we became excellent friends."

Mr. Boumedienne's successor, Chadli Benjedid, he described



King Hassan

as "a man without any wickedness, good, just and without any pride or brutality."

The king said corruption, especially a scandal over four ministers who were later convicted, was one of the main motivations for an abortive coup in 1971, when 1,400 troops stormed his seaside palace at Skhirat near Rabat.

He reaffirmed that his former defence minister, General Mohammed Oufkir, masterminded a second abortive coup in 1972 when air force jets tried to shoot down his airliner.

He said Oufkir shot himself in the head because "he would not have accepted to be tried by his

peers, before a military tribunal, and then led before the firing squad after being stripped of his rank. It was not his style."

He admitted for the first time that Oufkir was solely responsible for killing the left-wing Moroccan political leader Mehdi Ben Barka in Paris in 1965.

A Paris court sentenced Oufkir to life imprisonment in absentia for his part in Ben Barka's disappearance.

"I was placed before the fait accompli with the death of Ben Barka. I did not take part in any way, either by giving orders or even by listening... I am not guilty of anything in the disappearance of Mehdi," King Hassan said.

He said he was unaware of the severe conditions in which Oufkir's wife and children were held in custody for 17 years, or that military personnel convicted for their part in the abortive coups were also held in extremely harsh conditions at Tazmamart.

For several years the king and the government denied the existence of Tazmamart, where 62 members of the armed forces were detained. Human rights groups like Amnesty International said conditions were so harsh that half of them died in custody.

The survivors were released and Tazmamart was demolished in September 1991. "Quite frankly I did not think that conditions were like that," the king said.

The king said 60 per cent of his choices had proved wrong and 40 per cent right. "I had the courage to see my faults and to correct them," he concluded.

Peace unlikely in Afghanistan — mediator

KABUL (Agencies) — A leading peace negotiator in Afghanistan says the country's battling leaders are a long way from silencing their guns and could become bogged down in a Lebanon-style protracted war.

Ayatollah Mohsini, a peace mediator from a moderate Shiite party, has shuttled several times between President Burhanuddin Rabbani and his arch rival Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, chief of the fundamentalist Hezb-e-Islami party, to try to negotiate a truce.

Sporadic artillery fire rocked Kabul Friday as officials of the few remaining embassies in the shell-battered capital met to discuss whether to evacuate their staff.

The Iranian ambassador, a wounded diplomat and 13 staff have flown out as have most Indian diplomats and several Pakistanis after 18 days of fierce rocket exchanges between government troops and renegade Mujahideen groups.

Hospitals say nearly 3,000 people have been injured in the latest round of fighting and several hundred have been killed, although the exact number was not known since few bodies are brought to hospitals.

Mr. Hekmatyar says Mr. Rabbani came to power through a rigged vote by a national assembly and must step down before talks can start. Mr. Rabbani is demanding Mr. Hekmatyar remove his heavy artillery out of range of Kabul.

"Their opinions are not close to each other and they have some particular differences," Mr. Mohsini said in an interview late Thursday.

Mr. Mohsini warned that Afghanistan faced three "nightmare" scenarios if the warring sides failed to agree on a ceasefire.

Afghanistan's former communist rulers could take back power as in Tajikistan, foreign forces would be forced to intervene as in

Somalia or the country would slide into a "prolonged and stupid" war as in Lebanon, he said.

Mr. Mohsini, who leads a peace team made up of delegates from seven of the main Mujahideen parties, said he planned to talk next to individual commanders around Kabul to persuade them to support his negotiations.

Mr. Hekmatyar's Hezb forces, now aligned with the Shiite Hezb-e-Wahdat party, have been attacking Kabul intermittently since the Mujahideen took Kabul from its former communist rulers last April.

They launched a brutal offensive on the capital in August when 2,500 people were killed, and have since subjected Kabul to sporadic attacks.

In Jalalabad, the provincial government Friday released 17 Arabs suspected in the murders of four United Nations workers, officials said.

The suspects, from Yemen, Libya and Algeria, were arrested

Tuesday by the government of eastern Nangarhar province in the shooting deaths of a Briton, a Dutchman and two Afghans.

The shooting by three unidentified gunmen occurred Monday near the town of Surkh Dowl, 15 kilometres east of Jalalabad, the provincial capital. The U.N. workers' vehicle was ambushed while they were travelling to Jalalabad from the Pakistani border city of Peshawar.

The United Nations has since suspended its activities in the area and recalled its foreign workers from Jalalabad.

The Arab suspects were picked up from their base camp near the scene of the shooting, officials said. They were among thousands of Arabs who participated in the 14-year war against communist rule that ended in April.

After three days of questioning, officials said, the suspects were freed but ordered to move their camp away from the main highway that leads through Nangarhar to Kabul.

Israeli envoy sees 'blood libel' in Palestinian letter

GENEVA (AP) — Israeli Ambassador Itzhak Lior protested Friday the publication by the United Nations of a Palestinian letter containing what he said was an ancient lie that has sparked many attacks against Jews.

Mr. Lior said the 53-nation U.N. Commission on Human Rights had failed to distance itself from anti-Semitic expressions.

"This is what discourages us on end," Lior said.

He was referring to a letter written by Palestinian representative Nabil Ramlawi to the commission last Oct. 7, which was Yom Kippur, the Jewish day of atonement.

The letter was reprinted by the U.N. with a date of Dec. 3 and included in a file of documents given to delegations for this year's session of the Human Rights Commission, which opened Monday.

"The commission kind of dug it out and distributed it now when the session started," Lior said.

committing a massacre in the town of Rafah in the occupied Gaza Strip. Mr. Lior said Israel especially objected to the inclusion of one paragraph, which said:

"It would appear that the Israeli occupation authorities, who are today celebrating the day of atonement (Yom Kippur), are never fully happy even on religious occasions unless their celebrations, as usual, are marked by Palestinian blood and the immolation of innocent, defenceless members of the Palestinian people."

Mr. Lior said the writer had taken word-for-word an ancient "blood libel" against the Jews, and accused the writer of inserting "Israeli occupation authorities" for "Jews" and "Palestinian" for "Christian."

Similar statements against the Jews have appeared "through generations of Western history... primarily before the celebration of Easter, but also before Jewish holidays," he said.

Iran warns Britain not to politicise Rushdie affair

NICOSIA (R) — An Iranian newspaper said Saturday the British government should avoid politicising the row over Iran's death order against author Salman Rushdie.

An editorial in the English-language Tehran Times said relations with Iran were a "two-way street" and Britain should "face the realities and refrain from further politicising the issue."

The Iranian news agency (IRNA) said the paper's comments followed the British Foreign Office meeting with Mr. Rushdie for the first time Thursday and declaring that it was taking a confrontational stand with Iran against the fatwa issued on his life.

The Indian-born author held 45 minutes of talks with Foreign Office Minister Douglas Hogg and officials Thursday.

The 44-year-old author, accused by Iran of blaspheming Islam in his book "The Satanic Verses," said he believed his visit represented a symbolic show of government support.

The attitude of the British government has been "so irresponsible and wilful that it creates the impression that the blasphemous book might have been an official approved undertaking to humiliate Islam," said the newspaper.

It said Mr. Rushdie's overseas trips and visit to the Foreign Office proved "Britain's ill-will towards the world Muslims."

Mr. Rushdie has appeared in public in England several times in the past year, giving speeches and attending literary functions. He has also travelled to the United States and Ireland.

The paper said the British government was using Mr. Rushdie to damage relations with Iran.

"It must know that any pressure or threats will not succeed in having the decree overturned," it said.

Mr. Rushdie says he now sees more support at high levels for his case from some Western governments, the New York Times reported Saturday.

CIA under fire for role in BNL-Iraq loan scam

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) was criticised Friday by the Senate Intelligence Committee and by the agency's own inspector general for mishandling its role in a politically sensitive legal case involving \$4 billion in unauthorised loans to Iraq before the Gulf war.

In a report made public Friday, the CIA's inspector general found "carelessness" and "poor judgement" on the agency's part. The findings closely paralleled those in a 163-page report released earlier Friday after a three-month investigation by Senate Intelligence Committee investigators.

The committee report concluded that the CIA and the Justice Department failed to provide prosecutors with significant information in the case of the Atlanta bank manager accused of making the loans to Iraq.

Like the CIA's inspector general, the Senate investigation concluded the information was withheld because of bureaucratic bungling and ineptitude rather than any intent to deceive.

"CIA's mishandling of its role... was the result of many factors, especially the lack of dialogue between the CIA and the Justice Department," said the report by the inspector general. He attributed the problems to "flawed performance by many individuals" and "the failure of a number of managers to see this train wreck coming... and to act."

An abridged, unclassified version of the inspector general's report was issued hours after R. James Woolsey was sworn in as the new agency director in a private ceremony.

The internal CIA investigation was commissioned last October by then-CIA Director Robert Gates, who said in a letter dated Jan. 19 and issued Friday that he accepted all the conclusions and recommendations of the inspector general.

"There is no indication... that anyone had base motives or was

trying to do anything but a good job," Mr. Gates wrote. "Yet, no one in the CIA has anything to be proud of in this case."

Both investigations were undertaken after a storm of Democratic criticism starting last summer alleging that the Bush administration deliberately botched the prosecution of the Iraq loans case in order to cover up its support for President Saddam Hussein before Iraq's August 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

After taking depositions from 24 CIA officials and reviewing thousands of classified documents, Senate investigators found that the agency "produced occasional intelligence analyses whose conclusions were squarely at odds with the evidence being developed by the criminal investigation."

But while these analyses were conveyed to some offices outside the CIA, neither the attorneys at the Justice Department overseeing the case nor the federal prosecutors working on it in Atlanta could recall seeing them.

Specifically, committee investigators found that intelligence analysts concluded in several documents that officials at the headquarters of the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro in Rome knew their Branch manager in Atlanta was making off-the-book loans to Iraq.

Yet the prosecution's case was built on the premise that the manager, Christopher Drogoul, acted on his own to defraud BNL of more than \$4 billion.

"As a result of CIA's failure to provide this information previously, the criminal investigation was deprived of important information that potentially could have materially affected the BNL case," the Senate report found.

Mr. Drogoul was allowed to withdraw a guilty plea last year after information contradictory to the government's basic premise came to light. He is expected to stand trial this year.

Hamas seeks Iran's help, waits for funds

TEHRAN (AP) — Imad Al Azami of Hamas says he is still waiting for the \$20 million the Iranian government promised in November 1991 to help his group.

Asked when the money will materialise, Mr. Azami shrugged and said: "Ask the Iranians."

Western and Arab governments often accuse Iran of trying to export its revolution in the Middle East, Africa and Central Asia by providing money, weapons and military training to groups like Hamas.

But with \$30 billion in short-term debt and a budget deficit projected at \$14 billion, Western and Middle Eastern diplomats interviewed this week said Tehran's reach may exceed its grasp.

"Our hands are not long enough to reach everywhere," the Iranian leader, Hashemi Rafsanjani, said in a sermon Friday, referring to Iran's inability to stop fighting among Muslims in places like Tajikistan and Afghanistan.

The fund for Al Azami has not come through because Hamas refuses to provide Tehran with an accounting of its membership and activities, according to a Middle Eastern diplomat who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Despite mounting internal problems, Iran is obsessed with being the centre of the Islamic World, and diplomats believe Islamic agitation in neighbouring countries is emanating from Iran.

Iran is believed to have sent up to 400 cadres to each of the former Soviet republics of Azerbaijan and Tajikistan to spread the Islamic revolution, the diplomats said.

Neither effort was particularly

successful. The Azeris elected a nationalist Turkic president last spring, and Tajikistan is now controlled by former communists, with an isolated Islamic insurgency.

Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati, a senior aide to Iran's supreme spiritual leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, boasted in November that Iran was activating underground cells around the globe for a "third world war" against the West.

But other Iranian officials, and the groups themselves, deny Tehran is doing more than providing moral and political support for Islamic groups abroad.

"Our ties with Iran have no relation with the export of revolution, it's only to try to liberate our land. Our relations with any country or organisation are for that goal," said Mr. Azami, 37, an engineer who was expelled from Gaza by Israel in January 1991.

In an interview in his office in a wealthy northern suburb, he declined to say what he thought Tehran is providing, apart from the money he says he has not yet seen. Hamas and Iran both oppose U.S.-sponsored Mideast peace talks.

In Turkey, Interior Minister Ismet Sezzin said Thursday that "terrorists" arrested for murdering four leading opponents of fundamentalists had claimed they were trained in Iran. Tehran denied any involvement in the murders.

Algeria, Egypt and other Arab states also claim extremist campaigns are supported by Iran. Egypt says Iran is arming fundamentalists in Sudan.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Ghali hails Oman-Yemen boundary accord

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Secretary-General Boutros Ghali congratulated U.N. envoys from Oman and Yemen Friday on the final demarcation of their countries' disputed border after 10 years of negotiations. Ambassador Salim Ben Mohammed Al Khassaby of Oman and Yemen's charge d'affaires, Mohammad Ahmad Mohammad Basalamah, held a joint meeting with the secretary-general the day after they registered the new boundary agreement with the U.N.'s Department of Legal Affairs. "This final demarcation of the boundary between Yemen and Oman is in conformity with the principles of the U.N. Charter on the peaceful settlement of disputes," a U.N. spokesman commented.

Khamenei pardons more prisoners

NICOSIA (AP) — Iran's spiritual leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has pardoned 116 clerics, convicted and jailed by special religious tribunals, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported Saturday. It said the decree was issued at the request of Hojatoleslam Mohammad Mohammadi Reysahri, but did not disclose the crimes or the sentences of those pardoned. It was the second amnesty decree by Ayatollah Khamenei this week as Iran celebrates the 14th anniversary of the Islamic revolution. On Friday, IRNA said Ayatollah Khamenei had pardoned 619 prisoners. The dispatch, however, also did not cite their crimes or the length of the prison terms. IRNA noted that the amnesties came on the eve of the birthday of an important Shiite imam and coincided with celebrations this month of the 1979 revolution that toppled the Shah of Iran.

Bush meets with Turkish president

HOUSTON (AP) — Former President George Bush entertained a foreign dignitary for the first time since leaving office when Turkish President Turgut Ozal visited him Friday. Mr. Bush and Mr. Ozal met for about 20 minutes at Mr. Bush's Houston office and then went to lunch. "When I see him we have a lot to talk about," Mr. Bush said during a brief photo-taking session outside his office building. Mr. Bush called Mr. Ozal a good friend of the United States and said the visit was unofficial. He would not disclose the nature of their discussions. Mr. Ozal is making his annual trip to Houston for medical examinations. He has undergone a number of surgeries in recent years at Texas Medical Centre, including eye surgery and a heart bypass operation. He underwent a checkup earlier in the day before meeting with Mr. Bush and was headed for another after their lunch. Mr. Ozal was scheduled to travel to Washington Sunday and meet with President Bill Clinton Monday, then return to Turkey.

Police arrest 20 for bomb attacks in Turkey

ANKARA (AP) — Twenty people accused of belonging to a leftist group have been arrested for bomb attacks on Turkish companies and Western embassies over the past two years, police announced. The announcement said the suspects were members of the Front for the Turkish People's Salvation Party, a group active in the 1970s before the military cracked down on extremist groups. Six were arrested in Ankara last week and their interrogations led to the capture of the others in six other Turkish cities, the police said. The bombings were carried out against several Turkish firms and the embassies of the United States, France and Britain in Ankara. There were no casualties and damage was light. Those arrested had been convicted for similar crimes and served jail terms before being released a few years ago, benefiting from a partial amnesty, the police announcement said.

'Nazi hunter' denies knowledge of Demjanjuk papers

LOS ANGELES (R) — A former attorney with the Justice Department's "Nazi hunter" unit denied knowledge Friday of documents that purportedly could have helped clear suspected war criminal John Demjanjuk. Demjanjuk, a Ukrainian-born Cleveland auto worker, was convicted in Israel in 1988 of being "Ivan the Terrible," a gas chamber operator at the Treblinka camp during World War II. He has appealed his conviction to Israel's supreme court. Demjanjuk was extradited to Israel after being stripped of his U.S. citizenship. Citing new evidence from the former Soviet Union, he is challenging his extradition in the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati. Documents and photographs released by Moscow show that another man, identified as Ivan Marchenko, could have been the real "Ivan." The appeals court appointed U.S. District Judge Thomas Weisman as a special master to investigate whether the Justice Department's office of special investigations withheld evidence from Demjanjuk's lawyers that cast doubt on his identity in advance of the denaturalisation trial. The former Justice Department office of special investigation attorney, Bruce Einhorn, was questioned at a special hearing in Los Angeles Friday by Ed Marek, a federal public defender in Cleveland who is acting as Demjanjuk's attorney. During the three-hour session before Mr. Weisman, Mr. Einhorn, who is now an immigration judge, denied he had seen a memo from a colleague expressing doubt Demjanjuk was really "Ivan." At Friday's hearing, Mr. Einhorn denied seeing documents which purportedly cast doubt on Demjanjuk being "Ivan" and said he had no knowledge of any documents being withheld from Demjanjuk's lawyers before or during the denaturalisation and extradition proceedings.

Iranian avalanche death toll rises to 10

NICOSIA (AP) — An avalanche killed 10 people and injured 38 others when it swept over a busy mountain highway northeast of Tehran Friday, Iran's official Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) said. Two mini-buses and four cars driving towards the Shemshak ski resort were damaged in the avalanche, caused by heavy rainfall in recent days, said IRNA. In the Iranian plains, torrential rain over the past three days has caused millions of dollars' worth of damage to homes, farmland and roads, the agency reported Friday.

Zimbabwean president arrives in Tehran

NICOSIA (R) — Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe arrived in Tehran Saturday for a two-day official visit, the Iranian news agency (IRNA) reported. IRNA said Mr. Mugabe was welcomed at Mehrabad international airport by President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani. Mr. Mugabe told reporters he would discuss bilateral relations, the activities of the Non-Aligned Movement and international affairs. He praised Iran for its support for Zimbabwe in its fight against South African apartheid, IRNA said.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 723111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

17:30 Reeves d'enfants
17:40 Les Cles de Port Bourard
19:00 News French
19:15 Le Journal de L'histoire
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
20:30 Who's the Boss
21:00 Drama documentary
22:00 News in English
22:20 Feature film: "The Great Los Angeles Earthquake" (Part II)

PRAYER TIMES

05:43 Fajr
06:22 Sunrise/Duha
11:50 Dhuhur
14:51 'Asr
17:18 Maghrib
18:37 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swifich Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632705
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 837440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terraviva Church Tel: 62246

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 625441

Anglican Church Tel. 630551, Tel. 625443

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 771751

Armenian International Church Tel. 685320

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Tel. 624932, 624932

Church of the Nazarene tel. 675691

Min/Max. temp.

Amman 1/11

Aqaba 7/18

Desert 0/13

Jordan Valley 5/17

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 9, Aqaba 15. Humidity readings:

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

AMMAN: 71 per cent. Aqaba 45 per cent.

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AMMAN

Crown Prince describes region as single unit

Prince meets Japanese envoys

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan received at his office Saturday Mr. Yoshiji Nogami, deputy director of the Near East and Africa Desk at the Japanese Foreign Ministry.

Mr. Nogami, who was accompanied by a delegation from his department and the Japanese ambassador-designate to Jordan, discussed means of promoting cooperation in various fields.

He also reviewed with the Crown Prince scopes of cooperation in enhancing the Middle East peace process.

Prince Hassan described the countries between Mediterranean Sea and the Arab Gulf as a single regional unit, linked and affected unit, linked and affected by common economic, political, social, security and environment concerns.

Civil defence responds to 220 cases in 48 hours

By Elia Nasrallah
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Between Thursday and Friday the Civil Defence Department (CDD) responded to 220 emergency cases, some of which were caused by the prevailing weather conditions in the Kingdom.

There were 12 deaths, 193 injuries, and 18 fires, Major Nabil Kassar, CDD Public Relations Officer, told the Jordan Times Saturday.

Many of the fires were the result of mishandling of room heaters, boilers or chimneys etc.

He said the CDD transported many individuals suffering from illnesses, injuries, burns, heart attacks and food poisoning to

local hospitals.

Major Kassar said there were at least seven cases of people stranded in lifts and others besieged by snow and floods.

He said seven members of one family perished in their single-room house in the southern village of a Marjeh.

He said the family was asphyxiated by carbon dioxide fumes

when the home-made wooden heater they had constructed consumed all the oxygen in their unventilated room.

Last year the CDD responded to 513 fires, many of which were caused by heaters and electrical short circuits, Major Kassar said.

He said 31 citizens died and there was extensive damage to property from those fires.

Parliament committees to hold meetings

AMMAN (Petra) — A parliamentary committee charged with studying appointments at ministries and government departments held a meeting Saturday chaired by House Speaker Abdul Latif Arabiyat.

The committee members discussed its work plans and elected Deputy Mohammad Adoub Al Zaben as its chairman and Deputy Matir Al Bustanji as rapporteur.

The committee was formed by the Lower House of Parliament to investigate alleged unfairness in granting government jobs. The House Judiciary Committee Saturday held a meeting chaired by Deputy Saleem Al Zubi to discuss the municipalities draft law.

The committee endorsed most of the law's articles except for three which deal with the authority of the Council of Ministers to collect and increase fees.

The Judiciary Committee also met with several experts to discuss their views on the Landlords and Tenants Law.

The Lower House Finance Committee is due to meet Sunday morning under its chairman Abdullah Akaleh.

The committee is scheduled to discuss the 1992 value added tax (VAT) draft law and the 1992 Jordanian corporation for guaranteeing exports draft law.

Earlier the committee had invited the ministers of Finance and Industry as well as the president of the Amman Chamber of Industry to attend the meeting.

Also the House Education Committee will hold a meeting Monday to discuss the Teachers Association draft law and the prospect of paying field visits to the education departments in various parts of the Kingdom.

The House Agriculture Committee will meet Sunday to discuss a report on the agricultural situation in Jordan.

Meanwhile, the Upper House of Parliament Judiciary Committee met Saturday under the chairmanship of House Speaker Ahmad Al Lawzi.

The committee discussed the telecommunications draft law and another draft law on illegal acquisition of wealth.

The committee will resume its discussion of the two laws Sunday morning.

Bakers upset over cut in profits

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A carefully charted government drive to partly deflect the impact of an inevitable reduction and gradual elimination of subsidies away from the consumer to the profit-making commercial sector has led to a dispute between the Ministry of Supply and bakery owners over the recent increase in the prices of bread and flour.

The crux of the conflict is the complaint by the bakers that the increase in prices announced last week have narrowed their profit margin and the Ministry of Supply's rejection of this contention.

Notwithstanding its reservations, Minister of Supply Mohammad Saqqaf said, the ministry has set up a committee to study the dispute and is holding discussions with the bakers, represented by the Association of Bakery Owners in Jordan.

"We are open for dialogue and are willing to listen to genuine grievances with a view to addressing them," Mr. Saqqaf told the Jordan Times Saturday.

The special committee, he said, "will examine the situation and will make the necessary recommendation."

According to Anis Mahmoud Hamdi Anis, treasurer of the Association of Bakery Owners,

the ministry-announced increases in the prices of bread and flour are not compatible since the bakeries have to pay more for their raw material while not getting a proportionate raise in the selling price of the finished product.

Mr. Anis said while the price of Arabic bread was raised by 12 per cent — from 75 fils to 85 fils per kilogramme — the price of flour — "mohad" grade — went up by almost 30 per cent — from JD 42,450 to JD 54,500 per tonne.

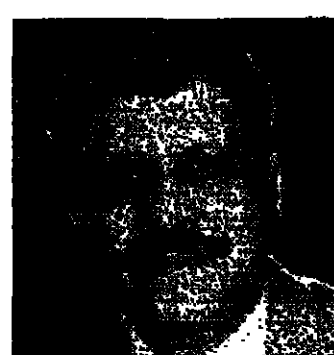
"Logically the increases in the prices of the primary material and of the finished product should have been compatible," he said.

"The increases, as they stand now, have dramatically reduced the profits of the bakeries since they have to buy flour at a higher price while there is no proportionate increase in the selling price of bread."

"Personally I believe that the ministry made a genuine mistake while determining the increase, and we hope that our discussions with the officials would lead to a solution of the problem," he said.

Mr. Saqqaf did not agree with the argument that there could have been any "mistake."

"The profits of bakeries are not determined by the prices of flour or bread, but by the total turnover," he said. "We believe that the recent increases have in fact be-



Mohammad Saqqaf

neffed the bakery owners."

Although the minister did not spell it out, the reference was to the more than 30 per cent increase in bread consumption in Jordan in the last two years.

Officials say the Jordan now consumes 600,000 tonnes of wheat every year compared with 400,000 tonnes two years ago. As such, the turnover of bakeries has gone up, leading to higher overall profits, they say.

The increase in prices of bread was part of the government's drive to gradually eliminate state subsidies in line with recommendations made in the economic restructuring programme Jordan has agreed to with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

At the same time, officials have repeatedly emphasised that the withdrawal of subsidies would not

mean burdening the poor with higher prices for essential food supplies, and hence the move to let the bakeries cushion part of the impact of the cut in subsidies for bread.

"It is clear that the government does not want to go beyond the 10-fils increase on the price of bread that the consumer has to bear," said an economic analyst.

"That leaves the bakeries, which the government believes could absorb part of the cutdown in subsidies."

The government has allocated JD 36 million for subsidies for staples — wheat, flour, rice, sugar and milk powder — in its 1993 budget, down from JD 45 million spent in 1992 and JD 60 million in 1991.

The price of subsidised rice was raised by 20 fils last month.

In an advertisement appearing in local papers Saturday, the Association of Bakery Owners restated its case and said it was not objecting to the slicing of subsidies — "which we have supported for a long time" — but refuses to accept lower profit margins. It appealed for the citizens' understanding of the bakers' dilemma.

Another grievance voiced by the Association of Bakery Owners is over the working hours set by the Ministry of Supply.

"We used to work between 6

a.m. and 6 p.m., but the latest ministry decision says that we should remain open between 6 a.m. and 7 p.m.," said Mr. Anis. "This represents a further decline in income for the bakeries since one extra hour of work means extra pay for the employees."

The bakers are also seeking better prices for themselves for "zero" grade flour — used to make western-style loaf-sandwich bread and hamburger bread.

"The price of zero grade flour is the same for bakeries as well as consumers," said Mr. Anis. "We believe that we, the producing sector which has a lot of expenses, should have a better price."

While the negotiations are continuing, the association said it was "suspending" all actions to press its case until it holds a general assembly meeting on Friday.

The association, which argues that the bakeries' profit margins were last reviewed in 1986, said it was seeking the support of the Consumer Protection Society and the Chamber of Commerce. Both institutions, it said, were aware of the "production costs and the narrow profit margins" of bakeries.

The association has 1,246 registered members, an additional 300 bakeries in Jordan are not registered members of the association.

Rain, snow to hit again Monday

AMMAN (J.T.) — Rain and snow are due to affect Jordan again starting Monday night with temperatures nearing 0°C in most regions, the Department of Meteorology said Saturday.

A department official told the Jordan Times that a cold air mass originating from the polar regions was moving towards the eastern Mediterranean through eastern Europe, causing the formation of an atmospheric depression that will bring rain and snow.

The official said the new depression would be accompanied by high northerly winds causing a drop in temperatures.

But there will be a gradual rise in temperatures Sunday to 12°C during the day and a drop to around 0°C at night.

He said frost is expected in the high and eastern regions of the Kingdom.

Princess Basma announces QAF's 3rd annual charity campaign

AMMAN (Petra) — For the third consecutive year, the Queen Alia Social Welfare Fund (QAF), will carry out a charity campaign with tens of volunteers and 5,320 girl guides from the scout movement around the country.

This year's campaign will begin at the start of the holy month of Ramadan, said Her Royal Highness Princess Basma, honorary chairman of QAF's board of trustees.

The Princess told a press conference in Amman Saturday that the campaign will start in the Amman region and move gradually to the other parts of the country during Ramadan to distribute food, clothing, medical aids and other in-kind and financial assistance to needy families.

In addition, some families will be granted loans to help start their own income-generating projects, and needy students with excellent records at community colleges and universities will receive financial aid, the Princess said.

The Princess said the Grand Mufti of Jordan announced in 1978 that monies intended for the Zakat Fund could also be distributed through QAF committees



Princess Basma holds a press conference Saturday at Queen Alia Social Welfare Fund (QAF) to announce 3rd annual charity campaign due to start during Ramadan. (Petra photo)

to benefit the Muslim people of Jordan.

She said that same year the Council of Ministers announced that financial aid to the poor will be deducted from the income tax margins.

Princess Basma said in 1992, during Ramadan, 30,000 families benefited from food, clothing and other assistance and 144 families received sewing and tricot machines or livestock to start their own businesses.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Youth Ministry heads for Beirut talks

AMMAN (Petra) — Youth Minister Saleh Irshaidat left for Beirut Saturday heading a Jordanian delegation which will participate in the meetings of the Arab Ministers of Youth Council due to open there Sunday. The five-day meetings will involve issues aimed at promoting pan-Arab cooperation in sports and youth-related fields. The delegation accompanying Dr. Irshaidat includes Ministry of Youth Assistant Secretary General Abdul Al Humidi and Director of the Youth Minister's office Abdul Rahman Al Armouti.

Senate speaker receives outgoing Chinese envoy

AMMAN (Petra) — Upper House of Parliament Speaker Ahmad Al Lawzi received Saturday at Parliament the Chinese ambassador to Jordan Zhang De Liang on the occasion of the end of his tour of duty in the Kingdom. Mr. Lawzi and the outgoing envoy discussed Jordanian-Chinese relations, particularly in parliamentary fields.

Education Ministry meets Tunisian delegation

AMMAN (Petra) — The secretaries general of the Ministry of Education, Khalid Al Arawi and Munther Al Masri, met Saturday with a visiting Tunisian educational delegation led by Al Muneef Abdul Jaleel, an advisor to the Tunisian Minister of Education. The two sides discussed the prospect of Tunisia's benefiting from Jordan's experience in developing curricula and school textbooks, as well as training teachers of Islamic education. The delegation, which arrived in Amman Thursday, on a week-long visit to Jordan, will visit the ministry's curricula department and the educational training centre, several schools in the Kingdom and the University of Jordan's Faculties of Sharia and Education.

Yarmouk president opens book exhibit

AMMAN (Petra) — Yarmouk University President Ali Mahfaza opened Saturday at the university's Students Affairs Deanship a comprehensive Arabic book exhibition. The five-day exhibit organised by the Al Bairaqa establishment and Al Manar Bookshop, included thousands of titles on various subjects.

Madaba begins health awareness campaign

MADABA (Petra) — The Madaba Social Development Department launched Monday a month-long public awareness campaign on health and social issues. The campaign, began in cooperation with the Jordanian Family Planning and Protection Society, includes lectures and seminars on AIDS, breast cancer, mental retardation and other issues.

3 flights diverted to Marka

AMMAN (Petra) — Adverse weather conditions in the area of Queen Alia International Airport led to transferring three incoming flights to Amman Civil Airport in Marka. The flights, coming from Dahrhan, Singapore and Colombo, were the only arrivals affected Saturday by low range visibility, sources at the Civil Aviation Authority said Saturday. The airport was open to incoming flights after 11 a.m., the sources said. They said all aircraft which landed at Marka Airport returned to Queen Alia Airport later in the day to resume their flights according to schedule.

U.S. agriculture group to visit Jordan

AMMAN (Petra) — A 30-member delegation representing the American Agricultural Education Foundation in California will visit Jordan by mid-February as part of a regional tour. The United States Information Services (USIS) said the delegation's tour will also include Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia. The delegation will hold talks with officials in these countries on issues pertaining to water rights, land reclamation, economic development and the problem of refugees.

'93 aid to needy will nearly double

AMMAN (J.T.) — Last year 5,560 families were added to a list of needy families who receive monthly assistance of JD 50 per family, Minister of Social Development Amin Awad Mashaqbeh said.

The addition raised the number of poor families on the regular assistance list to 22,397.

In an interview with Al Ra'i daily Dr. Mashaqbeh said JD 5.8 million were spent in aid to these families in 1992.

He said the government allocation for such aid in the 1993 budget was raised from JD 7 million to JD 13 million.

The ministry's National Aid Fund (NAF), which distributes the aid to the poor will be able to reach a wider scope of people requiring assistance, the minister said.

According to Dr. Mashaqbeh, the tribal governorate was the major beneficiary of 1992 financial aid, followed by the Maan governorate.

The NAF also gave JD 37,097 in lump-sum financial assistance to 493 families who had lost their income earners or faced a major tragedy, the minister said.

He added that last winter, the ministry compensated 757 people whose homes were severely damaged by snow storms.

The NAF also provides soft loans to heads of needy families and college graduates who are trying to start a business to support a family, Dr. Mashaqbeh said.

He said the NAF spent JD 1.7 million in 1,277 such projects in the past year alone.

The ministry's social development activities in 1992 included 22 income-generating projects, wide-scale programme to remove beggars and homeless people from the streets and the implementation of plans designed to reform and rehabilitate juvenile delinquents, the minister said.

Mbeideen: Afro-Asian meetings timely

KAMPALA, Uganda (Petra) — Justice Minister Youssef Al Mbeideen Saturday said democracy in Jordan has become a way of life for the Jordanian people under the leadership of His Majesty King Hussein.

In an address at the opening of the 32nd session of the Afro-Asian Legal Consultative Committee in Kampala Saturday, the minister said the kind of democracy practiced by the Israeli occupation authorities in Palestine can in no way be defined as a true democracy, since the living conditions of the Palestinian people and the daily practices by Israel against them clearly negate the meaning of democracy.

"What does it mean to expell 415 Palestinian citizens from their land and country... to a desolate place where they can find no food, clothing or medicine?" he asked.

Iraq's plight, the minister said, is a flagrant example of the injustice committed by human beings against their brethren and on the hegemony of the super powers.

The ministers also highlighted the dangers threatening the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina, criticising the inability of the world community to stop the injustices there.

He said the importance of convening the Afro-Asian meeting lies in the many changes sweeping the world arena, including the countries of Asia and Africa.

He said it became imperative for the countries of these two continents to meet in light of the new world order being shaped since they have many common concerns.

These countries' economic conditions are the same, their social goals are close, and their laws and legislations are similar, he said.

"Furthermore, the historical and cultural roots of their peoples are identical," he added.

Mr. Mbeideen said that if meetings between the delegations of these countries were a necessity in normal situations, they are more so now in view of current international changes and the new world order.

New cancer centre reports progress

AMMAN (J.T.) — A national task force charged with establishing the Al Amal Cancer Centre in Amman Saturday reported that it raised JD 4,175,796 in cash in 1992 and work on the structure of the centre was completed.

The task force, which met at the headquarters of the General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS) in Amman, said U.S. experts examined the centre and presented a report on its future needs to Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker who heads the national task force.

The JD 13 million cancer centre is being funded mainly by contributions from Jordanian citizens and institutions.

A statement following Saturday's meeting said the task force created a three-member committee chaired by Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) Governor Mohammad Saeed Nabulsi to advise the task force on investing the funds until the required equipment is to be purchased.

Discussions at the meeting also included procedures to take possession and register vehicles and land donated to the Al Amal Centre by institutions and citizens.

GUVS President Abdullah Al Khatib told the Jordan Times that arrangements were underway with the University of Jordan to introduce a special training course for 60 nurses on scholarships, who would be employed at the centre.

He said 12 nurses and 12 medical specialists were receiving training in cancer treatment in the United States, the United Kingdom and France.

Several members of the Lower House of Parliament recently submitted a motion to the government making it mandatory for Jordanians to pay an additional tax to help finance the cancer centre which will offer free treatment to needy patients.

According to Dr. Khatib, the centre's annual operational costs could reach JD 3 million in the initial stage.

U.S. firm to equip port loading machines with anti-dust devices

By Issam Qadamani
Special to the Jordan Times

AQABA — The Jordanian Ports Corporation (JPC) has signed a contract with the U.S. firm Middle East International Incorporated Systems to fit special equipment at the port to reduce the phosphate dust fall-out which has been polluting the port area.

Most of Jordan's phosphate is mined in the south near Maan and transported by train to the Aqaba for export via cargo vessels.

The Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC) last month reported that it exported 4.3 million tonnes of phosphate to 21 countries, registering an increase of 200,000 tonnes over 1991 figures.

Company Director General Thabet Al Taher said most of the exports went to countries in Asia, and for the first time to Australia and New Zealand.

The loading of phosphate on board the vessels has been contaminating the port area, according to JPC Director Dureid Mahasneh who signed the agreement with the U.S. firm.

Dr. Mahasneh told the Jordan Times that the agreement concluded in the past week is worth JD 500,000 earmarked from the JPC's 1993 budget dedicated to controlling pollution at the port.

The U.S. firm is expected to fit special equipment on the machines which load the phosphate onto the vessels and complete the project by July, Dr. Mahasneh said.

He said the corporation had allocated JD 1.5 million for the purchase of new equipment to control pollution in the sea, in addition to JD 800,000 for the purchase of equipment to help dispose of phosphate dust that might reach the port area during the loading process.

Somali clans clash in Mogadishu

(Continued from page 1)

Lance Corporal Raymond Marmolejo. "No incidents yet, but most of the people are fighting and they're getting pretty close to where we're at. They're all over."

U.S. forces walk a thin line in Somali, trying to use restraint while facing potential violence. Tension has been growing between the Somalis and the American forces that arrived Dec. 9 to safeguard the delivery of food to starving thousands.

Marines face snipers and looters and random violence, in addition to clan warfare. Two Marines have died. The Marines have killed several Somalis, including a 13-year-old boy whom they said appeared to threaten them Thursday, even though no weapon was found.

As the clans fought, a political committee working under U.S. envoy Robert Oakley was trying to negotiate a settlement between the two major clan factions, committee members urged the clans to return to their homes.

One of the clans is loyal to warlord Ali Mahdi Mohammad, who controls north Mogadishu. The other is a follower of General Mohammad Farrah Aideed, who controls south Mogadishu.

The sporadic fighting broke out Friday after Ali Mahdi people had tried to reclaim their homes, now occupied by squatters, in the contested area that divides the feuding factions. The Aideed clan resisted.

Mr. Ali Mahdi visited his clan Saturday and implored them, "Go back to your homes. We need peace."

A U.S. Marine spokesman, Lt. Col. Ron Stokes, said six Somalis had been shot in Friday's clan fighting. As word erroneously spread that the Marines had killed the Somalis, a crowd of up to 200 gathered in the Mogadishu port area and began hurling rocks at the Marines in the biggest anti-American demonstration since U.S. forces arrived in Somalia.

A U.S. counterintelligence team and senior Marine officers met with elders during Friday's fighting in efforts to resolve the issue. Mr. Ali Mahdi's people withdrew and agreed to meet peacefully Saturday with the rival clan. But instead fighting broke out.

Col. Lesnowicz said his mission was to make sure the streets are free from guns and bandits, "the

kind of criminal activity that interrupts our ability to feed and provide humanitarian relief."

"It's part of maintaining the order here," he said. "We can't provide humanitarian relief if the clan war starts again. Part of that humanitarian relief support is to make sure the clans don't begin fighting again."

Despite the fighting, 10 relief agencies under the auspices of Care began for the first time a coordinated distribution of dry food such as wheat to feed for three months 175,000 needy and displaced Somalis in Mogadishu.

The first convoys that went out Saturday were escorted by troops from international military forces to prevent any hijacking. The distribution sites where the wheat was unloaded were heavily guarded by Somali national police to prevent any food riots.

A Somalia militia leader held talks with U.S. officers and diplomats Saturday after disobeying an order to park his heavy weapons in a defined area.

The U.S. military command said Gen. Mohammad Said Hersi, known as Gen. Morgan, the son-in-law of former dictator Mohammad Siad Barre, was in the southern port of Kismayu Saturday morning for a meeting he had requested with the Americans.

U.N. spokesman Farouk Mawlawi earlier told reporters the U.S.-led task force had ordered Gen. Morgan to move his forces to a recognised cantonment area by 3 p.m. on Friday.

"At 2000 (8 p.m.) he had not moved. We have no further information but you recall what happened before," Mr. Mawlawi said.

American commanders have twice in the past 12 days used Cobra helicopter gunships to destroy Gen. Morgan's heavily armed trucks which disobeyed orders.

The U.S. spokesman did not mention the deadline and it was not immediately clear whether Gen. Morgan had moved his forces before meeting the Americans.

Gen. Morgan has been the stubbornest of Somalia's militia leaders in resisting the orders of the multinational force.

Most of Somali's other warlords have placed heavy weapons in areas agreed with the 23-nation task force, although large stocks of hidden arms and ammunition are still discovered almost daily.

WHAT'S GOING ON

EXHIBITIONS

★ Exhibition entitled "Modernist Still Life Photographed" at the American Centre.

★ Exhibition of watercolour paintings by Syrian artist Nazir Nab'a at Baladna Art Gallery.

★ Exhibition of paintings by the late Syrian artist Alfred Hatmal at Al Baka Art Gallery in Fuhes city.

★ Exhibition of paintings by four Arab artists from the United States — Ghada Jamal, Helen Khal, Suha Nour and Afaf Zurayk — at the Abdul Flamed Shoman Foundation Gallery in Jabal Amman, between the First and Second Circles — opening ceremony at 6 p.m.

★ Exhibition of photographs by Jean-Philippe Reverdot at the French Cultural Centre.

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Sunday's Economic Pulse

Points of disagreement over sales tax

By Dr. Fahed Al Fanek

The general impression is that the private sector, mainly traders and industrialists, harbours major objections against the sales tax draft law. Reporters told us that a major dispute over the law is brewing in the chamber of commerce, the chamber of industry, and the Ministry of Finance. We venture the claim that this is not so, even though the leaders of traders and industrialists went on record last week as objecting to the law.

The fact is that the draft law was thoroughly discussed by working committees, including representatives of the three parties concerned. The Ministry of Finance was accommodating and amended the draft to satisfy all the complaints of both parties as evidenced by the final minutes of the meetings signed by the three parties.

The disagreement was narrowed to three points only. When agreement over these three points seemed difficult, it was agreed to leave them to the Finance Committee of the Parliament which is a qualified arbitrator to determine what serves best the public interest.

The first point of disagreement was over the transition from the first stage of the law — "Sales tax" — to the second stage — "Value added tax". The Ministry of Finance thought that this should be left to the Council of Ministers to decide, but both the traders and the industrialists thought that it should not happen without a new law, to be enacted by the Parliament. We expect the Finance Committee to side with the private sector on this

specific point because the implementation of stage II will be a major step and not an urgent one. Leaving this step to the long process of law-making is a reasonable safeguard against a hasty decision that may suddenly be taken by the Council of Ministers.

The second point of disagreement was over the lists of commodities applicable to each rate of tax, namely 10 per cent, 20 per cent, zero, and excise. The private sector wanted these lists to be an integral part of the law, while the ministry insisted on leaving the lists to the discretion of the Council of Ministers. We expect the Finance Committee to side with the ministry's view point, because those lists must remain flexible. Errors revealed by actual application must be easily addressed and the lists must remain subject to amendments from time to time to respond to changing circumstances. It is not practical to go through the long process of enacting a law each time a commodity has to be added or deleted from any particular list, or the definition of a given commodity has to be clarified or altered. After all, the more important lists of the imports customs duty are left to the Council of Ministers. What is applicable to the customs tax lists should be applicable to the sales tax lists.

The third point of disagreement was whether the sales tax on imported commodities should be applied to the cost, insurance and freight (CIF) value before adding the customs duty, as the traders asked, or the full cost after adding the customs tax plus an estimated importer's mark up of 10 to 25 per cent, as the

industrialists demanded because the value of the domestic commodity ex-factory includes the element of profit of the manufacturer.

The protection of local industry will be best served by adopting the industrialists' extreme point of view. However, since the consumption tax was previously imposed on the CIF value only, before adding the customs, we think that the Finance Committee will take the middle road of adding the customs tax component, but not the profits, especially as the importer's profits vary, and in certain cases, may not exist.

The imposition of the sales tax is part of the economic adjustment programme, agreed upon with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The government originally committed itself to the implementation of the tax as of Jan. 1, 1993, but was unable to do it; the deadline was thus extended to April 1, 1993 and there is no reason why the Parliament may fail to issue the law on time.

The sales tax will replace the consumption tax. It is substantially a neutral tax which will not result in more revenue. It will definitely influence the prices of many commodities, but the overall cost of living should not be affected. The subtraction of more commodities and certain services to the sales tax will be offset by a reduction in the rate applicable to other commodities. Basic food items, babies' and students' requirements will be totally exempted.

Tour could bear fruit

U.S. PRESIDENT Bill Clinton's decision to dispatch Secretary of State Warren Christopher to the Middle East this month suggests that the Arab-Israeli conflict is indeed receiving a high-priority considerations by Washington. Christopher's trip to Israel and some Arab countries in the region beginning Feb. 17, being his first foreign mission, is obviously necessitated by the threat posed to the already fragile peace process through Israel's expulsion of more than 400 Palestinians in December. It goes without saying that without using Washington's good offices, the bilateral and multilateral peace negotiations between Israel and the Arab parties would grind to a halt over the expulsions.

To be sure, it is not only due to Israel's illegal act against the alleged Hamas activists that the entire peace process has been put on the line. It is also the snail pace of the talks themselves and Israel's stubborn refusal to deal with the legitimate leadership of the Palestinians and its core demands that is playing havoc with the future of the negotiations. Furthermore, the cycle of violence in the occupied territories is at a new and dangerous pitch, and this alone could prevent the negotiators from going back to the table or register any progress if they do.

Clinton appears to be pressing hard to defuse the new conflict over the expulsions, but he did not do enough to broker and endorse the so-called compromise offer by Israel. There are reasons to believe that the phased return of the expellees, as offered by Israel, will not stop at the first hundred Palestinians but will further pick up momentum later. No doubt the decision to delay the resumption of the bilateral and multilateral peace talks has this point in mind. But between now and mid-April, when the peace talks could start again, many things could happen on the expellee front as well as on other fronts, thus making the climate for the next round of peace talks more promising. As a matter of fact, the intermittent interruption of the negotiations could be put to useful purpose since this would offer the two sides ample time to reflect more on the future and weigh the options available to them.

This is why perhaps Clinton's decision to send his secretary of state to the area has a reassuring tone besides that of making it felt that the new administration is at least as keen as the previous administration to promote peace in the Middle East. Who knows, but the U.S. president and his team may still have pleasant surprises for the parties involved by applying full weight to the process till it comes to fruition. If it is accepted that the previous Democratic administration of Jimmy Carter was the one that made peace possible between Israel and Egypt, it can likewise be possible that the new Democratic administration of Bill Clinton may still be the one which will finish the job of extending peace to the whole area.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

IT IS clear to many observers that the U.S. secretary of state's coming visit to the Middle East is aimed at further strengthening Washington's hand over the peace process and the role of the American administration in handling the Arab-Israeli conflict, said Al Ra'i Arabic daily. In principle, one can deny this role and no one can deny the important role of the Russians and the Europeans in efforts towards peace and there must be a coordinated effort on the part of these powers to help bring about peace in the region. Therefore, it goes without saying that Washington single-handed dealing with the conflict can by no means attain the aspired peace between the Arabs and Israel, especially in view of the U.S. stand vis-a-vis U.N. Security Council Resolution 799 in which Washington openly sided with Israel, said the daily. The paper said that Washington's attitude towards the question of the expellees has no doubt harmed its credibility and reduced its chances of over reaching a settlement acceptable to the Arabs and the Israelis alike. Washington will be wrong to assume that pressure exercised on the Arab leaders during Secretary of State Warren Christopher's visit can bring about capitulation on the part of the Arab countries and subjugation to the U.S.-Israeli will. The Arabs view the aspired peace as one which can help the Palestinians attain their legitimate rights in their own homeland, said the daily. The paper said that Washington is in need of regaining its credibility in order to win over the confidence of the Arab parties in the peace process; it said that the first step towards attaining this goal is through objective and fair handling of Resolution 799.

BY REFUSING to return to their homeland the way Israel wants, the deported Palestinians have placed the whole question back in Israel's lap, said Sawt Al Shaab daily Saturday. The paper said that the deported men demand immediate and full implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 799, which guarantees their repatriation altogether and not piecemeal. For this reason, we believe that the courageous stand on the part of the expellees is bound to make the U.S. secretary of state's coming mission to the region a total failure. The secretary of state wants to pave the ground for the resumption of the peace negotiations, but this can by no means happen as long as Israel defies the U.N. resolutions and refuses to return the deported Palestinians, the paper said. It said that although President Clinton has committed his administration to pursuing the peace efforts, nothing can be done without the repatriation of the deported men. The paper urged Arab states involved in the peace talks to have one stand and convey their joint views to the U.S. secretary of state during his coming visit. It said these countries should refuse to go to the peace talks, refuse the Israeli plan for repatriation and demand that only when Israel is committed to implementing all U.N. resolutions can the talks resume.

Deportations — an imperative in the Zionist design

By Michael Adams

Israel's expulsion of 400 Palestinians has been condemned with rare unanimity by the international community. Yet this, far from being an isolated or unique incident, should rather be seen as marking a stage in a process that has been going on for more than 40 years. What was unusual about this incident was the amount of publicity it received. This, and the brutal circumstances in which the expulsion was carried out, strengthened the hand of those who argue that the dispossession and dispersion of the indigenous people of Palestine was a deliberate, even inevitable accompaniment to the birth of Israel.

Several recent studies coming out of Israel have pointed towards this conclusion. Five years ago in *The Birth of Israel: Myths and Realities*, the Israeli historian Simha Flapan challenged several of his countrymen's cherished assumptions. Among them was the belief, widely held outside as well as inside Israel, that when the Jewish state was established in Palestine in 1948, the Palestinians who left their homes and went into exile did so of their own free will or in obedience to orders from Arab politicians. Nonsense, said Flapan, who insisted that, while some people with means were able to evacuate their families from areas threatened by the fighting, "hundreds of thousands of others, intimidated and terrorised, fled in panic, and still others were driven out by the Jewish army, which, under the leadership of Ben Gurion, planned and executed the expulsion in the wake of the U.N. Partition Resolution."

"Ethnic cleansing"

In other words, what Chaim Weitzmann described as "a miraculous simplification of Israel's tasks" was not a miracle at all, but a determined exercise in what is nowadays called "ethnic cleansing". And this version of events was confirmed by another Israeli historian in a book published within months of Simha Flapan's. This was *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-49* by Benny Morris, which drew on previously unpublished Israeli sources to show that the great majority of the refugees who left Palestine before and during the first Arab-Israeli war of 1948 were intimidated into going or simply expelled by the organised forces of the infant state of Israel.

After describing in detail how

the Palestinians were driven out of one village after another, Mr. Morris gave careful thought to the question of whether or not the expulsions had been carried out as part of a prearranged plan, and came to what seemed a surprising conclusion: that although individual commanders in different sectors had acted more or less identically, driving out the Palestinians and then blowing up their villages to prevent their return, there was no central plan and each was acting on his own initiative, without orders from above. And this is where Nur Masalha, the Israeli Palestinian author of *Expulsion of the Palestinians*, comes in. For his thesis, reinforced by some remarkable evidence from declassified Zionist archives, is that from the outset the most influential figures in the Zionist movement realised that their objective of establishing a Jewish state in a territory already inhabited by a settled Arab community could only be achieved if the Arabs could in one way or another be induced to leave Palestine, and that they acted accordingly.

At first the idea was put forward of buying them out; but the Zionists soon realised that there were severe limits to what they could achieve in this way. The Zionist idea of Palestine as "a land without people for a people without land" was a fiction; the reality was that most of Palestine was inhabited by an indigenous population which was deeply

attached to the land. The conclusion was inescapable: other means had to be found and if necessary the Palestinians would have to be dislodged by force.

This was too delicate a subject to discuss openly, but the evidence which Dr. Masalha has uncovered from Zionist archive material and private memoirs of the period shows that the Zionists, however differently they expressed themselves to the outside world, were startlingly frank in talking among themselves. Not that they used the word "expulsion" even to each other, preferring the euphemism "transfer"; but it was well understood what was intended. For instance on July 12, 1937, David Ben Gurion confided to his diary:

"The compulsory transfer of the Arabs from the valleys of the proposed Jewish state could give us something which we never had... We must uproot from our hearts the assumption that the thing is not possible. It can be done."

Ben Gurion hoped at first to get the British to do the job for him, but there were obvious problems:

"I see above all the enormous difficulties in uprooting by force some 100,000 (Palestinian) Arabs from the villages they have inhabited for hundreds of years."

But the more he thought about it, the surer he became that by one means or another "the thing"

had to be done: On Oct. 5, 1937, he wrote to his son with unusual frankness:

"We must expel Arabs and take their places... and if we have to use force — not to dispossess the Arabs of the Negev and Transjordan, but to guarantee our own right to settle in those places — then we have force at our disposal."

"Transfer" the answer

In November 1936 the British government had sent out the Peel Commission to investigate the causes of unrest in Palestine and the Commission's report, published in July 1937, advanced for the first time the idea of partition. This presented the Zionists with a problem: they had no wish to share Palestine, but a state embracing the whole of Palestine would have to accommodate large numbers of Arabs... unless of course the Arabs of Palestine could be "transferred" to somewhere else. To tackle this problem, the Jewish Agency formed in November 1937 a special committee with the unambiguous title of the Population Transfer Committee. From 1937 onwards, partition and transfer were closely linked in Zionist thinking.

In 1937, after strenuous efforts to promote Jewish immigration, Jews numbered just 30 per cent of the population of Palestine. Looked at dispassionately (and Dr. Masalha is careful to main-

tain a scholarly detachment) it seems scarcely credible that an immigrant minority should have aspired to take over the territory of Palestine and deport its indigenous population. Yet the sources quoted here clearly show that this was indeed the intention of the Jewish Agency executive and subsequently of the first Israeli cabinet under David Ben Gurion, the most revealing source is the diary of Yosef Weitz, the moving spirit in the Population Transfer Committee, who had made up his mind as early as December 1940 that:

"(A)mong ourselves it must be clear that there is no room for both peoples in this country... The only way is to transfer the Arabs from here to neighbouring countries. Not a single village or a single tribe must be left."

Weitz pursued his objective single-mindedly, lobbying all the important figures in the pre-state

Zionist establishment. When the "transfers" were being carried out in 1948, he made it his business to see that, as the inhabitants of each village were expelled, the village itself was destroyed to prevent the possibility that they might one day return. Watching one such demolition, he noted with surprise that he felt unmoved by the sight: "No regret and no hatred, as this is the way of the world."

Dr. Masalha's book will excite controversy, not because his conclusions can be challenged — the sources leave no doubt about the facts — but because the book exposes in detail the nature of the Zionist design and the means by which it was achieved. This is an important and scrupulous piece of revisionist history. It is also a text which should be studied by those who are still trying, against all the odds, to put an end to the tragedy of which Palestine and the Palestinians have been the victims for half a century — Middle East International.

LETTERS

Only 'two-ways' about it

The following letter, signed by several Jordanians, was sent to U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher on Feb. 3, 1993.

We wish to express our dismay at your endorsement of Israel's latest proposal to permit the return to their homeland of 100 of the 396 remaining Palestinians it illegally expelled. The willingness to support Israel's continued evasion of its responsibility to fulfill the dictates of Security Council Resolution 799, on the grounds that it has made a gesture of compromise, puts political expedience before the rule of law, not to mention the humanitarian and moral imperatives that it ignores. The endorsement does neither you nor the Clinton administration any credit.

There has been no ambiguity about the illegality of the Israeli government's act of expulsion in the first place. The United States recognised that in voting for the unconditional return of the expellees. The action does not even accord with Israeli law, such as it is for Palestinians, since the expellees were not accorded the right of trial for any crime before the internationally condemned punishment was meted out. The subsequent offer to permit each expellee an appeal before a military tribunal, not against their lawfully administered conviction but against Israel's imposition of an illegal punishment, as well as the acknowledgement of a mistake made in the case of nine expellees, has already made a travesty of law. A lawyer should find it even more compellingly offensive to have this travesty continued with the politically expedient suggestion to return some arbitrary number, substantial in appearance but significantly less than the demand that justice makes for the return of all.

Ironically, the proposal admits the illegality of the original expulsions. The Israeli government has not acknowledged that it made another mistake affecting 100 of the expellees. Therefore, it must be assumed that a number was arbitrarily selected to satisfy political expedience and, hopefully, to assist the United States in forestalling further action by the Security Council against Israel, while clearing the way for peace negotiations to continue. The gesture is cynical, one to which regrettably the United States is making itself a party.

The United States, though it tried, was unable to persuade the world that the injustice of the expulsions should be kept separate from the peace process. It is not a good omen for peace if the U.S. is then prepared to pursue the travesty of law even further by supporting the Israeli proposal.

Your mere insistence that the proposal is a step towards conforming to the requirements set by Resolution 799 does not make it so. That is, at best, the arrogance of power talking; and the shame of it is that a decent and dignified gentleman by all public accounts must be the one to express it. Not even the Israelis accept the interpretation. Rabin all but used the language of "political deal" in describing the proposal as an agreement between Israel and the United States.

You underestimate the intelligence of world public opinion in general and Arab public opinion in particular if you imagine that the cynicism of the agreement and your defense of it escapes their attention.

President Clinton said recently that President Saddam Hussein would be judged by his behaviour. That is a fair standard. The same standard, one single standard, may be applied as justly to the mighty as to the weak, the arrogance of power notwithstanding.

Whatever else the power and the will of the United States may eventually impose on the world in this matter, the only legal, moral and dignified choices are to immediately require full adherence to Resolution 799 by Israel or sanctions against it. We are confident that world public opinion in general and Arab public opinion in particular share this view.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Yugoslav diplomacy takes offensive prior to U.N. debate

By Jovan Kovacic
Reuters

BELGRADE — Yugoslavia mounted a diplomatic drive apparently aimed at improving its tarnished image in the run-up to last week's U.N. debate on Bosnia by seeking to portray itself as victim rather than aggressor.

Yugoslav Foreign Minister Alija Djukic sent the United Nations Security Council a letter Wednesday listing what he said were daily Bosnian Muslim and Croat attacks against Yugoslavia.

"The goal of these attacks is to draw Yugoslavia at any cost into the civil and religious war in Bosnia, or a military conflict against Croatia, so that it would continue being blamed for the crisis," he said.

It was the fifth letter to the Security Council from Yugoslav political leaders in as many days.

"The drive to show Yugoslavia's restraint and put the blame on other sides was mounted after the West gave several signs that were interpreted in Belgrade as indicating its time of ostracism may be nearing the end," a senior

diplomat said. The international community last year turned Yugoslavia into an international pariah by suspending it from major world bodies, including the U.N. General Assembly and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), and imposed stiff economic sanctions for its role in the Bosnian war.

The Serbs feel they have been unfairly singled out as the main aggressors in the conflicts that followed the violent break-up of former Yugoslavia.

"The aim of the diplomatic drive is also to dissuade new U.S. President Bill Clinton from military intervention in Bosnia," the diplomat said.

International mediators Lord Owen and Cyrus Vance have shifted talks on ending the Bosnian war from Geneva to New York in the hope that the Security Council and the United States will support their peace proposals.

But they have still to persuade a reluctant new U.S. administration to back their plan after Washington raised several

objections particularly regarding maps of post-war Bosnia.

Diplomats said an indication that the West may be shifting its stance on Yugoslavia was an invitation by international mediators to Serbian strongman Slobodan Milosevic to attend the Geneva peace talks.

Mr. Vance and Lord Owen hailed him as instrumental in bringing peace in Croatia a year ago, ignoring former U.S. Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger's depiction of him as a war criminal.

Croatia's incursion into the Serb-held Krajina enclave two weeks ago, a diplomatic windfall for the Serbian president, was seized on by the Serb media as a snub to U.N. peace efforts.

Belgrade and the powerful Yugoslav army were quick to declare they did not want to interfere in Krajina, while warning that their restraint was limited and it was up to the West to keep Croatia in check.

"Belgrade feels a change in the wind from the West and it is utilising it to the hilt," a source close to Serb authorities told

Reuters.

The diplomatic offensive also gives the Serbian leader the opportunity to consolidate politically Serbia's military gains in the civil war.

But his most urgent need, according to political analysts, is to bring an end to U.N. sanctions against Yugoslavia which are causing increasing disruption in the ramp state and threaten to spark social unrest.

"All that has been gained on the ground against the Croats and the Muslims could easily evaporate from within Serbia if sanctions are not lifted soon," one analyst said.

Strikes by transport and communal workers in Belgrade have raised tension as thousands of commuters, most of them working for the equivalent of only \$32 a month, were forced to walk to work in freezing temperatures.

As runaway inflation rips earnings power to shreds, more strikes are threatened and economists warned the government to tread carefully to avoid the threat of unrest.



U.S.: Timing for Mideast peace talks to be announced soon

WASHINGTON (USIA) — U.S. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said Friday a decision on the timing for the next rounds of Middle East peace talks — both at the bilateral and multilateral levels — can be expected fairly soon.

The co-sponsors of the peace process, the United States and Russia, are currently consulting on dates, Mr. Boucher said, "and we would expect to have a decision fairly soon on the timing for the next rounds for those talks."

Secretary of State Warren Christopher has talked by telephone with Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev about dates for both bilateral and multilateral talks, a senior U.S. official told reporters later.

"We think it's time to refocus attention on the important work of the peace talks," the spokesman told reporters. "In our exchanges, generally I'd say that we're finding broad acknowledgement of the importance of avoiding counter-productive confrontations at the United Nations and of the need to advance the Middle East peace talks."

"We think that the members of the international community should not permit extremists who are determined to destroy chances for peace to exploit this issue for their own purposes," Mr. Boucher declared.

The bilateral phase of the peace process involves direct talks between Israel and its immediate Arab neighbours — Syria, Lebanon and Jordan — and negotiations between Israeli and Palestinian representatives.

The eighth round of those talks concluded in Washington in mid-December.

Five specific working groups are involved in the broader multilateral phase of the peace talks. In early December at the conclusion of a meeting of the multilateral steering group in London, it was tentatively announced that the economic development working group would meet in Rome Feb. 9-10; the water working group would meet in Geneva Feb. 16-18; and the refugee working group would meet in Oslo Feb. 16-18. The arms control and regional security working group was scheduled to meet in Washington during February and the environment working group was to meet in Tokyo during February. Those tentative sessions may have to be rescheduled later because the U.S. and Russian co-sponsors have not yet sent out oral invitations to the participants, U.S. officials said.

"This proposal, by the Israeli government, resolves the problem," Mr. Boucher said, pointing out that it "not only allows a significant number of the deportees to return immediately but it sets up a process of cutting sentences in half so that they will all be back by the end of the year. It sets a process of review so that there's a prospect of some being returned sooner, and it sets up a process so these people can get the relief and assistance they need."

Israel has said 100 deportees could return home immediately and the remainder will be allowed

to return by the end of this year through a combination of sentence reductions and reviews.

Mr. Christopher conferred with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in advance of the Israeli moves. "We obviously participated in discussions with them about this issue," Mr. Boucher said. "In the end, it's their proposal and we support it."

The spokesman acknowledged he had seen news reports that the deportees themselves have rejected the Israel repatriation plan. "I would say generally that we are in touch ourselves with Arab governments, with Palestinians in the Middle East and with many others throughout the world," he said.

"Over time, certainly we've been in touch with various Palestinians about the issue of the deportees, but that's about as far as I can go," Mr. Boucher said.

"In our exchanges," he said, "we're finding broad acknowledgement of the importance of avoiding counter-productive confrontations at the United Nations and of the need to advance the Middle East peace talks."

According to news reports, Dr. Ghali asserted the compromise is not responsive to Security Council Resolution 799, which called on Israel to allow the return of the deportees to Israel or occupied territories.

That's the point that we're making," Mr. Boucher told reporters. He emphasised that U.S. contacts with Palestinians did not mean a resumption of a dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). "We don't talk to the PLO, period," Mr. Boucher declared. "We're talking to the Palestinians that we've always talked to."

The spokesman pointed out that no draft resolution has been tabled at the United Nations calling for sanctions against Israel for not immediately returning all the deportees.

"We do think it's time for everybody to look ahead," Mr. Boucher said. "And we've stated our view clearly on organisations that one way or the other, through violence or otherwise, have tried to disrupt the peace process."

White House Communications Director George Stephanopoulos differed with U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali on the compromise involving Palestinians deported to southern Lebanon from territory occupied by Israel.

According to news reports, Dr. Ghali asserted the compromise is not responsive to Security Council Resolution 799, which called on Israel to allow the return of the deportees to Israel or occupied territories.

That's the point that we're making," Mr. Boucher told reporters. He emphasised that U.S. contacts with Palestinians did not mean a resumption of a dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). "We don't talk to the PLO, period," Mr. Boucher declared. "We're talking to the Palestinians that we've always talked to."

The spokesman pointed out that no draft resolution has been tabled at the United Nations calling for sanctions against Israel for not immediately returning all the deportees.

Peace process is top priority, Hamilton says

WASHINGTON (USIA) — Restarting the Middle East peace talks is the highest priority on the agenda of Middle East issues for the House of Representatives' Foreign Affairs Committee, Lee Hamilton, the committee's chairman, said Feb. 3.

Other priorities include U.S. policy on Iraq, the arms buildup in the region, human rights and democracy, and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, Hamilton said in an interview with USIA.

Hamilton, a Democrat from Indiana, is also the chairman of the House subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East.

The Foreign Affairs Committee will conduct public hearings, hold private discussions with administration officials and foreign visitors and consider legislation on these issues throughout the coming year, Hamilton said.

Working to restart the Middle East peace talks "is the highest priority in the Middle East, on the national agenda and is for the committee as well," Mr. Hamilton said.

The United States must not only work to get the process restarted, but also work "to push it toward a consideration of more substantive problems and perhaps even an agreement," he said.

To that end, the United States must take a more direct role in the process, he said. The parties to the peace talks "will not agree by themselves. There will have to be an active role for the United States."

Exactly what form this role should take is a "big policy question" the Congress and Clinton administration must tackle, Mr. Hamilton said. "It is a delicate role... We must be a catalyst and a facilitator without being too intrusive," he said.

On Iraq, Mr. Hamilton said the committee will focus its attention on Iraqi compliance with United Nations resolutions. Hamilton has recently spoken out forcefully against Iraqi violations of the no-fly zone over southern Iraq.

The committee will also look into the buildup of arms in the Middle East, he said. Mr. Hamilton has expressed his concern over U.S. arms sales and stability in the region.

Commenting on U.S. arms sales, he said: "I don't expect there to be as many arms sales in 1993 as there have been in the recent past. But there will still be some and we will pay attention to arms sales."

The promotion of democracy and human rights is a priority of the Clinton administration's foreign policy, an issue the committee will also address, Mr. Hamilton said.

"The committee will have an interest... in the progress towards more accountability, more democracy, more pluralism, more respect for human rights in the

Middle East," he said.

"There must be no doubt at any time where the United States stands with respect to all of these issues," he stressed. "We have to push for institutions of accountability, for freedom of travel, freedom of the press and freedom of thought."

Noting the movement towards democracy in certain states in the region, Hamilton said the United States must support this trend by encouraging newly forming parliaments and the extension of voting rights.

While pursuing this policy, however, the United States will "work toward what is achievable and what is feasible," Hamilton said. U.S. policy regarding human rights and democracy must take into account each country's internal situation as well as U.S. interests, he said.

"Human rights and democracy, though a very important part of American foreign policy, is not the sum and substance of American foreign policy. It is not the totality of it. And so we have to take into account other interests that we have as well," he said.

Mr. Hamilton said there is a need in the West for a better understanding of the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the region. To that end, this issue will be addressed by the committee in the coming year, he noted.

Commenting on the complexity of the issue, Mr. Hamilton said Islamic fundamentalism "plays out differently in different countries. It does threaten some of the regimes in the Middle East; it does not threaten others."

"It is hard to get your hands around it," he said. "We will just have to understand it better and see how it plays out."

Iran's support for Islamic fundamentalist groups in the region and terrorism continues to stand in the way of improving U.S.-Iranian relations, Mr. Hamilton said.

"I don't think that we will see too much change in the short term in the relationship with Iran," he said. "So long as those problems remain I think it's going to be very difficult to devise a policy for Iran which improves relations."

While long a supporter of re-arming the U.S. foreign assistance programmes, Mr. Hamilton said no dramatic changes will take place in that programme this year.

However, he does "hope that we begin sometime during this year with an effort to reform the foreign aid programme." When and if that reform takes place, depends in large part on the Clinton administration, he added.

Asked about the relationship between the Congress and the Clinton administration on foreign policy, Mr. Hamilton said he expects it will be a good one.

Arafat asks Egypt to help evictees return

(Continued from page 1)

without a solution to the (expellees) problem," said Abdul Aziz Al Rantisi, leader of the 396.

"Christopher is coming to convince Arab states to go to the peace talks. But I am surprised at how America ignores Resolution 799 and yet wants the Arabs to trust its credibility," Dr. Rantisi said.

The evictees received smuggled bread, vegetables and canned food from villagers overnight. They took advantage of the sunshine to wash clothes.

They refused to accept a list of the 101 who could return which a driver tried to deliver to the camp Friday but listened eagerly to Israel Radio broadcasts of the names.

"We want our return to be collective like our (expulsion) was collective," said Sheikh Hamed Al Bitawi, speaker of Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, who heard his name on Israel Radio.

He said the offer was a bid to sidestep Resolution 799. "We demand that Israel bow to the international legitimacy and take us all back as soon as possible," he said.

The United Nations should approve whatever steps are necessary to force Israel to take back the Palestinians it expelled, Arab League Secretary-General Esmat Meguid was quoted as saying Saturday.

He said if Israel did not submit to Resolution 799 "we would have no choice but to call for the implementation of Chapter Seven of the (United Nations) Charter."

Chapter Seven allows the imposition of sanctions and the possible use of force.

Dr. Abdul Meguid was speaking in an interview with the London-based Arabic magazine Al Wasat.

PLO says Iraq endorses peace talks

(Continued from page 1)

starting to make their relations with the world," he said, saying that on the peace process Mr. Arafat "found understanding from them and we think it is a positive signal."

He said that Mr. Arafat's visit was "the first time we heard from them such clear words... now they loudly say it to us so clearly and you cannot have more than one explanation."

The moderated policy was expressed both by President Saddam and by other Iraqi officials in the president's presence, Mr. Ahmad said.

Historically, he said, Iraq was "speaking about the liberation of total Palestine and this is the theory of the (ruling) Baath Party." But now, he said, Iraq is speaking about the territories occupied since 1967, "not historical Palestine."

The endorsement of the peace process, although still not proclaimed by Iraq, is part of a series of moves calculated to improve its relations with the rest of the world and convince the West that it is pragmatic and reasonable.

Iraq's declaration of a ceasefire in the two, allied-imposed "no-fly" zones also are part of Iraq's strategy, he said, adding that other overtures were expected.

"If they find a positive response, they will give more," he said, declining to elaborate. "If they find any response from the other side they will go on."

Even if there is no early positive response, he said, "they can be patient longer."

"Do you think he (Saddam) wants to quarrel with the whole world?"

Clinton starts cutting luxuries

(Continued from page 1)

ty Secretary of State Clifford Wharton.

At the heart of the reform is the creation of a new global affairs bureau, to be headed by former Senator Timothy Wirth, with responsibility for democracy, human rights, labour, terrorism, narcotics, international crime, population, refugees and migration, oceans, science and the environment.

Mr. Wharton said the State Department had been slow under previous administrations to address many of these issues.

Mother and Child Health Centre caters to the needy

By Cosima Hadidi

Special to the Jordan Times

Dr. Mohammad Abdul Rahman has a busy morning: over twenty anxious mothers, holding infants and young children, are waiting to see him at the Ministry of Health's Mother and Child Health Centre in East Amman.

He gives each child a routine check as well as a specific check for the ailments the mothers describe to him. In addition to medical prescriptions, he also gives the mothers solid common-sense advice. "You should remove the diapers of your baby regularly to expose its skin to fresh air and sun, and do not use harsh detergents when washing the diapers," he tells one mother whose infant suffers from chronic diaper rash.

"Many mothers come to me with faulty preconceived ideas about child health and development which they receive from relatives and neighbours. Educating them about proper hygiene and health practices is one of the major aspects of my work," he says, adding that this is often a

difficult task as many mothers are sensitive about these issues and do not like to be told to be more careful about cleanliness and sanitary practices.

The Mother and Child Health Centre is located in Wadi Sur where it serves a number of densely-populated low-income areas including two refugee camps. In addition to the child health unit, the centre has a nutrition unit and a maternal unit where expectant mothers and mothers of young children receive advice and medical care. It is also a training centre for university and college students of health care, nutrition, nursing and midwifery.

The morning of the interview four nutrition students from the University of Jordan were gathered around Hussein Saleh, the head of the nutrition unit at the centre teaches them about conveying nutritional messages to audiences of different educational and socio-economic levels.

Mr. Saleh and his staff give group and individual advice to parents whose children are mal-

nourished or suffer from nutritional deficiencies.

"We teach people about the basic food groups and the types of foods that provide various nutrients, so that they can make sound nutritional choices based upon their budgets and environments," says Mr. Saleh.

"Giving out samples of foods to people who cannot afford them is not very helpful, as this is only a short-term solution, whereas knowledge about a balanced diet helps not only the mother who learns it, but also her neighbours, relatives and friends whom she passes these messages on to. This creates a sound nutritional base for the whole community," he says.

The unit encourages breastfeeding as the most nutritious and healthy way to ensure development and prevent illnesses of infants, and monitors the growth and development of infants whose mothers bring them in for regular check ups.

A mother of twins has come down from Irbid to check on the development of her sons. The

boys are red-cheeked, chubby and very active. A little over a year ago, these babies were born prematurely and underweight, explains Mr. Saleh, and the mother was going to bottle-feed them since she had been told that it was not possible to breast-feed twins. However, the staff at the centre showed her the proper way to breast-feed twins, encouraged her to do so, and soon the growth chart of the twins reflected their healthy and rapid development and growth.

However, visits at the homes of some families, show nutritionists that often there are families whose economic conditions prevent them from fulfilling even the most basic nutritional needs.

"We tell them about alternatives to expensive foods, such as lentils instead of meat, but some families cannot even afford lentils whose price has gone up in the past few years," says Mr. Saleh. He explains that the vicious cycle of poverty, ignorance and illness is what leads to malnourishment and is often difficult, if not impossible, for families to break.

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Navratilova ousts Graf to meet Savchenko-Neiland in final

YOKOHAMA, Japan (Agencies) — Veteran Martina Navratilova clinched a dramatic victory Saturday over top seed Steffi Graf in the first semi-final of the \$750,000 Toray Pan-Pacific Open tennis tournament.

Navratilova overcame a first-set deficit to down the German 4-6, 6-3, 6-3. Both players served consistently well but it was Navratilova's hammering returns, coupled with her prowess at the net, that ultimately overwhelmed the world's number two player.

"She returned much better and stronger," said a dejected Graf after the game. "I didn't get many returns in so it was difficult to set up the points."

"I made a lot of mistakes. Martina keeps running to the net all the time, forcing you to hurry your shots and then make mistakes."

A beaming Navratilova told reporters: "I kept going for my shots, playing with conviction and not ever backing down."

Graf got off to a good start, breaking Navratilova's serve in the first game. With powerful serving and some superb cross-court forehand shots to take the first set 6-4, it looked as if Graf was headed for her second final of the year.

But Navratilova broke Graf's serve in the fourth game of the second set and the fifth game of the final set with some blistering backhand cross-court returns, coupled with superb volleying at the net.

"I returned very well," the American said. "I think the difference today was not that I could break her serve, but that I could hold on to my own."

Graf's concentration was adversely affected in the second set when she earned a few unfavorable line calls.

"I was getting upset by all the overrules. There were too many in a row, so it was very strange," the German said.

The Czech-born Navratilova is now a step away from winning her 162nd career singles title — a feat unmatched in either men's or women's tennis.

Looking ahead to Sunday's final, Navratilova said: "It's hard to go out again after having beaten

Steffi (Graf), because you feel as though you've already won the whole tournament."

Navratilova's opponent will be unseeded Larisa Savchenko-Neiland, the world-ranked 74, who beat fourth seed and doubles partner Jana Novotna of the Czech republic 7-5, 6-3.

The Ukraine-born Latvian is primarily known as an accomplished doubles player, who with Natalia Zvereva in 1991 became the first Soviet to win a Wimbledon title.

In a 10-year career, she has managed to win only one singles tournament — in St. Petersburg in 1991 — from six finals appearances.

In head-to-heads with Navratilova she trails 7-1.

Chatrier steps down as French tennis head

Philippe Chatrier, who steered tennis through controversy involving boycotts, Olympics and hot pants, steps down Saturday as president of the French Tennis Federation, ending more than 24 years of top-level involvement in the sport.

His successor as president of the FFT will be elected by members Sunday.

Chatrier, 65, gained wide recognition as the president of the International Tennis Federation from 1977 to 1991. He also was the president of the Men's International Pro Tennis Council from 1979 to 1985 before pro tennis was taken over by the players.

Chatrier was once a player himself, reaching the fourth round of Wimbledon when he was France's No. 6 ranked player in 1951.

He became a journalist and was a talented amateur singer, even fielding offers to perform in some Parisian night clubs. However he chose to devote his life to tennis. He moved to vice president of the FFT in 1969 and went to the presidency in 1972.

As president of the International Federation, he was an instrumental force in returning tennis to the Olympics as a medal event.

It was a demonstration sport in 1984 and became a full Olympic sport in 1988. Chatrier became a member of the International Olympic Committee in 1990.

He also oversaw the inauguration of the Grand Slam Cup, which brings together the top performers from the four major tournaments. Criticized at first because of the lofty prizes — \$2 million to the winner — it is now being grudgingly accepted by the players.

During his tenure, Chatrier was faced with boycotts, such as when India refused to meet South Africa in the 1974 Davis Cup final.

Tennis was one of the last sports to bar South Africa from international competition and one of the first to allow it back. In 1991 the Association of Tennis Professionals, held the world doubles championship in Johannesburg.

As president of the French Tennis Federation, Chatrier was in charge of the expansion of the French Open, both literally and figuratively. He oversaw enlargement of Roland Garros stadium and the surrounding complex as the clay tournament grew from a small affair to one of the major events on the French sports calendar.

One of his greatest thrills was watching France upset the United States in Lyon to win the 1991 Davis Cup.

It wasn't all easy. During the 1990 French Open, he was involved in a clothing dispute with Andre Agassi, who introduced an outfit described as "the new lycra, hot-lava look" — glowing pink and black on his shirt, black denim shorts and pink cycling tights underneath.

When some members of the tennis establishment — including Chatrier — criticized the apparel, Agassi shocked them by saying "These boxes will look for anything to talk about." He criticized Chatrier for pastoring Roland Garros with sponsor's names.

The International Tennis Federation threatened fines and a crackdown on garish outfits, but only Wimbledon stays within the "predominantly white" guidelines.

Davis Cup

Iran leads Jordan 3-0 after winning doubles

By Aileen Bannayan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Iran Saturday clinched an early victory over Jordan in the Davis Cup Asia/Oceania Zone Group 2 first round tie when Mansour Bahrami and Moharram Khodai defeated Faris and Laith Al Azzouni 6-2, 6-1, 6-1 in the doubles match.

Iran had scored two victories in the singles matches Friday when Mustafa Saleh beat Hani Al Ali, and Mansour Bahrami defeated Imad Abu Hamda.

The doubles match was delayed for 20 minutes as there seemed to be a misunderstanding between the Jordanian team and International Tennis Federation (ITF) referee Jeremy Shales as to who would be playing for Jordan.

Jordan's Ali, who suffered a cramp in the third set of his five-set singles match Friday was scheduled to play the doubles match with partner Abu Hamda. However when it became apparent that he would not be able to play, it was decided that the Azzouni brothers would play. Later on the JTF seems to have decided that Abu Hamda and Faris Al Azzouni would play, but failed to inform the ITF referee in due time.

The Azzouni brothers, Faris 16 and Laith 15 gave it their best as they played Iran's more experienced players.

Both teams easily held serve in the first two games. The third game in which the younger Azzouni, Laith, was serving was one of longest and most interesting of the three-set match.

The game was levelled at deuce 11 times as impressive returns by Laith robbed Iran of the chance to take the game fast. However Laith double-faulted and Iran broke serve and also won the following



Faris Al Azzouni

game to lead 3-1.

Her Majesty Queen Noor arrived at the Sports Palace Court in the fifth game in which Faris was serving. The game was again held at deuce for 6 times with superb overheads by Laith. Iran's Bahrami and Khodai again managed to break serve to establish a commanding 4-1 lead.

Bahrami's powerful serves held Laith and Faris at 40-0 as Iran won the sixth game to lead 5-1.

Laith answered back with an ace and accurate serves of his own to win the next game and trail 5-2. Iran's Khodai held serve and clinched the first set 6-2.



Laith Al Azzouni

Iran broke serve in the first game of the second set and took a 2-0 lead after the 37-year-old Bahrami easily held serve (holding six balls in one hand).

The younger Azzouni, showed that he will be a player to be reckoned with in the future as he hit beautiful returns to win the third game trailing 2-1.

From then on Iran easily held serve and sealed the second set 6-1.

The same thing happened again in the third set, as Jordan only held serve once in the second game. Iran's Bahrami and Khodai who had more cohesion, experience and a mastery of serves won the third set 6-1 and concluded a 3-0 victories lead over Jordan.

In a post-match statement to the Jordan Times the Azzouni brothers commended the play of the Iranian players, but said they had not trained and were not prepared to play a doubles match.

"I was here (on the tennis court) practising with my brother for a possible singles match when I was informed Imad Abu Hamda and I would play the doubles," Faris said. "Later on it became apparent the ITF referee had been initially informed that my brother and I would be playing but he was not told that there was a change of plans. So Laith and I ended up playing."

"We were not really prepared to play the match. Even in training we concentrated on singles matches," added Laith. "We did not expect to be playing, so there was no serious effort to actually prepare us to face such experienced players," both said.

The reverse singles will be played Sunday. It was not clear however, who would be playing for Jordan.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY FEBRUARY 7, 1993

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Give yourself plenty of time to complete your tasks today. You may find that staying focused on your objective is challenging. Treat yourself to a luxurious footbath.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Now you are craving to go straight to those who have the ability to make your credit, career or civic affairs work better and get their support.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You have the opportunity to advance and progress where those projects that are important in your scheme of things may be involved so do so.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Whatever discussions you have with those of a business or practical turn of mind can be excellent in showing you a better pathway in the future.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Whatever requires that you listen more closely to understand and go along with the wishes of one who is a close associate is now good.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) A splendid day to get into whatever opportunities face you to improve and increase your productivity where usual obligations, activities, are concerned.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You see the ways and means to have a continued happiness at

whatever outlets you enjoy most with your congenial companions to make long time recreational plans.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You have a good chance to get those things and put into motion that plan of action that you have been considering for your own dwelling.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You like to have your affairs so organized that they run smoothly and this is a perfect day to look at your desires and make a campaign to get them.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Get right into the various means by which you can have more of this world's goods and get into the specifics required to add to your abundance.

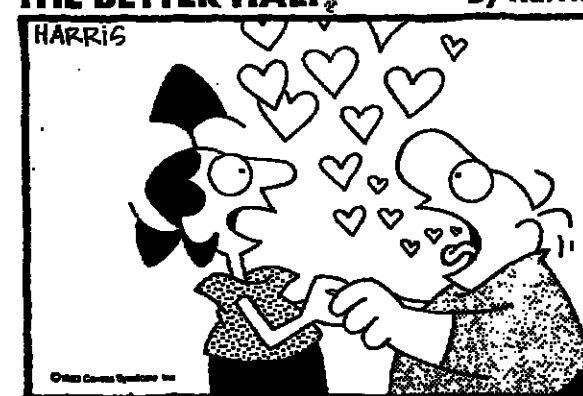
CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You like to do whatever is necessary in order to gain your personal desires and this is a particularly good day for so doing.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You wisely get out of the social whirl now and concentrating upon gaining the mundane and material matters which are pressuring you.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Whatever you have the urge to obtain of an intimate nature is closer to you than you realize so reach out and with a little effort it can be yours.

THE BETTER HALF

By Harris



"Stanley! It's not polite to burp in the middle of a kiss!"

SPORTS NEWS IN BRIEF

Connors, Agassi into semis

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Jimmy Connors kept alive his improbable journey toward the Volvo San Francisco Tournament finals, scoring a 6-3, 4-6, 6-4 victory over Chuck Adams in the quarterfinals Friday night. Connors, unseeded in the tournament, will face Brad Gilbert in the semifinals. While the top-seeded Agassi, who has commuted to the tournament daily from Las Vegas on his private jet, plays sixth-seeded Jeff Tarango.

Lowly rise up and bite their betters in NBA

DALLAS (R) — It was a good night for bad teams in the National Basketball Association Friday as cellar dwellers rose up and bit their betters all over the league. Even Dallas won. Sean Rooks scored 26 points and Derek Harper added 22, including the go-ahead free throws with 1:51 remaining, as the Mavericks held on to beat the Indiana Pacers 105-104 and snap their eight-game losing streak. The Mavericks won for just the second time in

their last 25 games and the fourth time all season against 38 losses. At Washington, Pervis Ellison and Buck Johnson each scored 20 points to lead eight Bullets in double figures as the Atlantic Division's worst cruised to a 138-111 victory over the Golden State Warriors.

Vogt wins women's combined, Street takes silver

SHIZUKUJISHI, Japan (AP) — Miriam Vogt is a formidable skier at any time. She's especially difficult to handle when she's feeling confident. Vogt got a major ego boost in the form of a gold medal in the women's combined as the World Alpine Ski Championships began handing out the loot. Vogt earned the combined gold with two wonderful exhibitions of racing. She finished only .02 seconds behind one of the top slalom skiers in the world, Austria's Anita Wachter, in the opening phase of the combined. On Friday, Vogt placed second in the downhill behind Picabo Street, the extroverted young American who seems ready to step into the big leagues of ski racing.

Bird's No. 33 retired

BOSTON (AP) — Larry Bird donned his old Celtics warmup suit and, for one last night, chants of "La-receer, La-receer, La-receer" rained down from an adoring, packed house at Boston Garden.

For one last night, he dominated the parquet floor. The crowd roared as, once again, he buried 3-pointers, saved the ball by diving to the court and passed the ball behind his back.

It seemed so real to the fans who had seen it all for 13 years.

But they were only memories, video highlights played on huge overhead screens at a 2½-hour ceremony in which Bird's number "33" was retired hoisted to the dusty rafters on a green-and-white banner.

Bird could do almost everything on a basketball court. He couldn't turn back the clock.

So while the lights were down as the videos rolled, Bird would rise from his stool and stand as if the painful back that forced his retirement was acting up again.

Bird, never one to back down on the court, finally gave in to the agony and retired Aug. 18 after a 13-year NBA career.

Parades of his former teammates, video greetings from ex-players and an extended conversation with former L.A. Lakers great and longtime opponent and friend Magic Johnson pre-

ceded Bird's closing remarks.

"I never put on a uniform to play a game. I put on a uniform to win," Bird, who wore his warmups for the entire ceremony, told the crowd in a polished talk.

"I'm going to miss running the pick and roll with (center) Robert Parish. I'm going to miss throwing the ball down low to (forward) Kevin McHale and watch him do his work."

"Most of all, believe it or not, I'm going to miss the fans of Boston," he added.

"I did my very best to please each and every one of you," he said. "Tonight, my basketball career is officially over and I had a blast."

Then he took his 18-month-old son Connor from his wife Dinah and walked with him toward the Celtics locker room as the song "Small Town" was played in tribute to Bird's rural Indiana roots and the number "33" rotated in green laser lights on the center-court stage he had left.

Bird's teammates from the 1981, 1984 and 1986 championship teams showed up, also wearing Celtic warmups. Johnson, Bird's only opponent on the program, sat through most of it in street clothes.

Then he changed and was introduced in his Laker warmups. He opened the jacket to reveal a Celtics T-shirt.



Larry Bird

"Larry, there will never, ever, ever be another Larry Bird," said Johnson, who entered the NBA with Bird in 1979 and retired before this season. "I love you. I respect you."

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



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LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION

North-South vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH
♠ J
♥ A 8
♦ Q 8 7 6 2
♣ K Q 6 3

EAST
♠ A K 7 6
♥ Q 9 5 4 3
♦ K 10 7 3 2
♣ A 4 3

SOUTH
♠ 10 5 2
♥ Q 5
♦ A K J 10
♣ A 10 8 5

The bidding:
South West North East
1 Pass 5 Pass
Pass Pass

Opening lead: King of ♠
Even the strongest of us can be tempted by the lure of an overtrick. See what happened to South, declarer at five diamonds, on this hand from a team match.

At this vulnerability we would have made a takeout double of one diamond with the West hand. While we might be a point or so light in high cards, the perfect distribution offers a high degree of safety. Note that game in a major depends only on guessing the heart situation. North bounced directly to five diamonds because he didn't want to

have the opponents competing in a major suit.

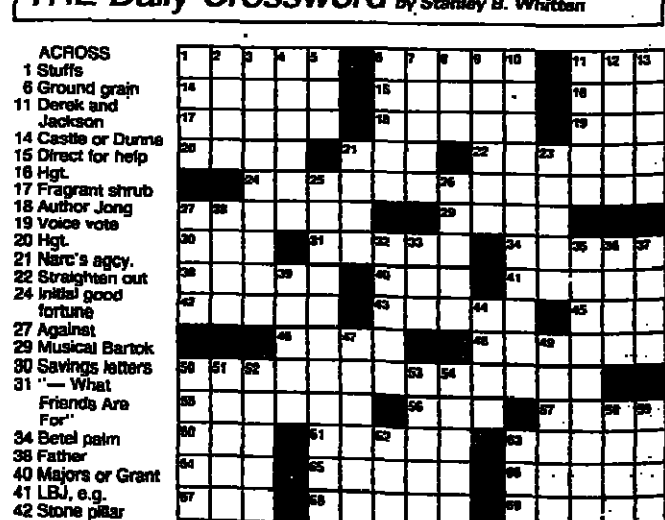
West led the king of spades and East followed with the nine—a suit preference signal for the higher of the remaining side suits. In this case, hearts. Being a good partner, West dutifully shifted to a low heart, and declarer saw no harm in letting it ride round to the queen. East's king completed the defensive book, and with clubs distributed the way they were, declarer eventually had to concede a trick in that suit for down one. Unlucky.

We can find no good reason for refusing to believe the defenders' signals. The contract is cold unless West holds four clubs headed by the jack (if East holds club length, the ten can be finessed). In that event, declarer will need to engineer an endplay to bring home the bacon.

Declarer should rise with the ace of hearts at trick two, come to hand with a trump and ruff a spade. Another trump provides the entry for another spade ruff and the king and queen of clubs are cashed.

When East shows out on the second club, declarer simply axia with a heart. If East wins the trick, the defender is forced to yield a ruff-shaft. If West wins, either a ruff-shaft or a club into declarer's tenace nails down the contract.

THE Daily Crossword by Stanley B. Whitman



- ACROSS
1. Stuffs
 2. Ground grain
 3. Denial
 4. Jackson
 5. Castle or Dunne
 6. Direct for help
 7. Hgt.
 8. Fragrant shrub
 9. Author Jong
 10. Voice vote
 11. Hurl
 12. Marc's agency
 13. Strengthen cut
 14. Initial good fortune
 15. Against
 16. Musical Barock
 17. Savings letters
 18. "What Friends are for"
 19. Dental pain
 20. Father
 21. Majors or Grant
 22. L.S., e.g.
 23. Stone pillar
 24. Hawaiian porch
 25. Adherent: suff.
 26. Surfeit
 27. Moves with little effort
 28. Michael Douglas film
 29. Small cove
 30. Slashed away
 31. Average grades
 32. Nicklaus' org.
 33. Fibers River leader
 34. Sort
 35. Shade tree
 36. Kind of space
 37. Remus of fiction
 38. Plains, IL
 39. Requisites
 40. Precipitous
 41. Down
 42. Stack
 43. Good cover
 44. Rejoice
 45. Soundrels
 46. NYSE
 47. Patching
 48. Envy color
 49. Showed again
 50. "Had a Hammer"
 51. Fast
 52. Pony
 53. Arm of a river
 54. Soap ingredient (with 44D)
 55. Plate
 56. Boothe Luce
 57. Imbution
 58. Buddy of TV
 59. Blip
 60. Part of QED
 61. Woody or Steve
 62. Polio, e.g.
 63. Being
 64. Throw
 65. Aardvark meal
 66. Boving nickname
 67. See 12D
 68. Paper handle
 69. Emphatics
 70. Men, e.g.
 71. Fish
 72. Hits hard
 73. Bit
 74. Layers
 75. First name in mystery
 76. Extravaganza
 77. Summer on the Seine
 78. A noted Glisson

Vance, Owen push on efforts to bring Bosnian war to an end

BELGRADE (R) — International mediators pushed on with efforts to bring Bosnia's 10-month-old civil war to an end Saturday, but hopes of parallel talks to restore peace talks in neighbouring Croatia were dashed.

In a surprise move, rebel Serbs in the Croatian enclave of Krajina said they will not attend proposed talks at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

The Belgrade-based Tanjug News Agency said Krajina Serb authorities would only negotiate with Croatia after its troops had withdrawn from land they seized in an offensive begun on Jan. 22 to reclaim Serb-held areas of the enclave.

Both sides in the conflict were invited by international mediators Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen last Tuesday to join peace efforts at the United Nations, where negotiations to end the civil war in neighbouring Bosnia resumed Friday after reaching deadlock in Geneva a week ago.

Lord Owen and Mr. Vance will continue discussions with Bosnia's warring Serbs, Muslims and Croats over the weekend before briefing the U.N. Security Council Monday.

The pair, representing the European Community and the United Nations were optimistic that new U.S. President Bill Clinton was moving behind their three-part peace plan after initial scepticism.

The package, based on a new constitution, a ceasefire and division of Bosnia into 10 semi-autonomous provinces drawn largely on ethnic lines, has so far only been accepted by Bosnian Croats.

In Munich, U.S. Defence Secretary Les Aspin discussed the Bosnian crisis with allied ministers in a major diplomatic push by President Bill Clinton to end the bloody civil war there.

Mr. Aspin met British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and the Defence Ministers of France, Germany, Canada and other NATO nations at an annual Western conference on security policy.

"We're going to try and put together a package after we've consulted with these people... sometime the middle of next week look for something," said Mr. Aspin.

Tanjug said Krajina Serb officials decided at a meeting in their main town of Knin Friday not to send a delegation to New York.



Serbian forces patrol a field in the self-declared Serbian republic of Krajina. Serbs and Croats have been clashing in southern Croatia since the Croats

launched an offensive against Serbs on Jan. 22 to reclaim territory captured by the Serbs in 1991 (AFP photo)

It quoted government adviser Boro Martinovic as saying the Krajina authorities would only negotiate with the Zagreb government if Croatia "unconditionally fulfilled" U.N. resolutions demanding an end to the hostilities and withdrawal from all land gained since Jan. 22.

The Security Council unanimously condemned Croatia's aggression and called for the withdrawal on Jan. 25.

Croatian Defence Minister Gojko Susak is already in New York.

Tanjug said Mr. Martinovic added that the Krajina authorities "showed their readiness to cooperate with the U.N. by, among other things, refraining from a full-scale counter-attack to liberate the occupied areas of Krajina."

The Croatian offensive breached a year-old U.N.-monitored ceasefire into buffer zones around the edges of the mountainous Krajina.

Serb forces were pushed back along a broad front of southwest Krajina, inland from the Adriatic port of Zadar, and Croat troops captured a key north-south land route, an airfield and the Peruc hydroelectric dam.

The dam, taken only after a heavy artillery battle, was damaged by mines exploded by retreating Serbs and will have to be torn down after its 25-kilometre

reservoir is drained. It was being inspected by British experts Saturday using remote-controlled underwater cameras to check whether it will not collapse before the lengthy drainage process is completed.

U.N. Protection Force (UNPROFOR) officials confirmed they had seen no signs of a Krajina Serb counter-attack, although Serb militias were digging in and strengthening their lines.

The peacekeepers said places along the front-line such as Obrovac, 40 kilometres east of Zadar, were ghost towns.

With below-freezing temperatures gripping most of Bosnia and Croatia, there was little fighting reported around Krajina during the night.

Krajina Serb army Commander Mile Novakovic said in an interview published Saturday by the newspaper Dnevnik in the northern Serbian town of Novi said that the land gained by the Croats would be retaken and their "general offensive will soon be completely broken."

He was also reported as telling reporters in Knin that more than 3,000 Croats had been killed in the fighting since Jan. 22, compared with 92 Serb fighters killed and 304 wounded.

Commander Novakovic said a lorryload of Croatian soldiers had been wiped out when they ran

into one of their own minefields while returning to Zadar from the war zone.

In Bosnia, the Serb-besieged capital Sarajevo suffered only one minor outbreak of grenade blasts overnight after being shelled heavily Friday.

Minor infantry clashes and mortar attacks were reported in scattered areas throughout the former Yugoslav Republic.

German Chancellor Helmut Kohl told the meeting of senior Western defence officials Saturday the international peace plan on Bosnia was a realistic attempt to end the war.

In another apparent signal to U.S. President Bill Clinton, who plans major troop cuts in Europe, the chancellor made a passionate plea for the Americans to keep a substantial military presence in Europe in their own interest.

Mr. Kohl said the Yugoslav peace plan, on which Mr. Clinton has voiced reservations, must be implemented quickly once approved by all warring sides.

"The longer the conflict continues, the more likely it is to spread to neighbouring regions," Mr. Kohl said. "This would be an immediate threat to the security of Europe as a whole."

"The peace plan presented by Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen is a realistic attempt to put an end to the war," he said before meeting separately with Mr. Aspin.

Zaire premier says dismissal by Mobutu illegal

KINSHASA (R) — Zaire's Prime Minister Etienne Tshisekedi said Saturday dismissed President Mobutu Sese Seko's bid to sack him, saying the strongarm leader had no legal right to do so.

In a television speech Friday night, Mr. Mobutu blamed Mr. Tshisekedi for riots in which at least 80 people were killed and said he would ask the transitional parliament to name a new premier.

"The question is to see if Mr. Mobutu has the right to say what he has said. He has none," Mr. Tshisekedi told Reuters. "I was elected by the national conference and I remain so."

Mr. Tshisekedi, chosen last August by the pro-democracy forum, said an interim constitution approved by the conference

took away Mr. Mobutu's power to hire and fire prime ministers. Mr. Mobutu disputes that document and his supporters have put forward their own version.

The two men are locked in a long-running power struggle over reforms which would end Mr. Mobutu's 28-year grip on the huge central African country.

Mr. Mobutu previously appointed Mr. Tshisekedi as prime minister in October 1991 but fired him within a week because he refused to swear allegiance to the president.

That dismissal caused fresh riots a month after several cities were devastated by army-led looting. More than 250 people died in the two flare-ups.

The capital Kinshasa appeared

calm Saturday after Mr. Mobutu's announcement, although witnesses said armed soldiers had robbed passers-by in western Binza district.

The current clash over a new banknote, issued by the pro-Mobutu Central Bank but declared inflationary and illegal by the prime minister, sparked more riots just over a week ago when soldiers paid in the new notes were unable to spend them.

Estimates of the death toll range from at least 80 to more than 1,000. Most observers believe several hundred were killed, mostly rampaging soldiers mown down by elite presidential troops.

Mr. Mobutu said his specific reason for firing Mr. Tshisekedi was that he had failed to form a

new, broader transitional cabinet including presidential supporters. Mr. Tshisekedi says he was unable to because Mr. Mobutu's backers deliberately failed to come up with the names they promised.

Looking confident and relaxed at his modest Kinshasa home, the premier said it was up to the transitional parliament, the High Council of the Republic (HCR), to decide whether to form a government without the president's men.

"We have no interest at all in excluding anyone. Clearly if Mr. Mobutu takes too long over these names, it's up to the HCR to take the decision of forming a government despite their absence," he said.

Rebels call off Angola peace talks

LISBON (R) — The Angolan rebel movement the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), said Saturday it would not attend planned peace talks with the government in Addis Ababa next week and would continue to fight until the government was prepared to make concessions.

UNITA, which rejected its defeat by the ruling MPLA in U.N.-supervised elections last September, also announced that it would release foreigners captured in the northern oil town of Soyo Sunday.

The announcements were contained in a statement issued on behalf of UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi, which was faxed to Reuters in Lisbon.

UNITA said it could not attend a fresh round of peace talks with the government, which was due to start in the Ethiopian capital on Feb. 10, because its delegation to a first round of talks in Addis Ababa from Jan. 27 to 30 had not yet returned to UNITA headquarters in the central Angolan city of Huambo.

"The UNITA delegation to the Addis Ababa negotiations has not arrived in Huambo to give its report to colleagues in the interior. In consequence it is not possible to organise another round of negotiations on Feb. 10," the UNITA statement said.

The statement said a senior

UNITA official, Jaka Jamba, would maintain contact with the U.N. special representative for Angola, Margaret Anstee, to agree on fresh dates for a meeting.

But it accused the government of failing to offer concessions to UNITA and said the rebel movement would continue to fight until it was offered conditions for peace.

UNITA and the ruling MPLA signed a peace agreement in 1991 ending 16 years of civil war, but it broke down after UNITA rejected its election defeat and Angola lapsed back into full-scale civil war six weeks ago.

Accusing Angolan President and MPLA leader Jose Eduardo Dos Santos of winning "irregular and fraudulent elections," UNITA said:

"He does not deceive us, he does not propose a truce, simply a policy of victors and vanquished."

"It is only in this context that we took our manly decision to resist until we achieve a better balance."

"We want peace and we will seek peace when this becomes a reciprocal conquest (for both sides). Until then, we have right on our side and we will prove that we have force too."

The statement said that UNITA would release foreigners, captured when it overran the northwestern oil town of Soyo

two weeks ago, at an unnamed airport in northern Angola Sunday.

The rebels seized 17 foreigners in Soyo — 14 Portuguese, one Argentine, one Briton and one Italian — but the statement did not say how many would be released.

The UNITA statement bitterly attacked dissidents in the rebel movement who had defected to the government.

It also said that a statement by UNITA's official spokesman Jorge Valentim earlier this week proposing a federal structure for Angola with considerable powers devolved to provinces did not reflect the movement's official policy.

The statement said Mr. Valentim had merely floated the idea in a personal capacity.

"These are not suggestions to be attributed to the UNITA leadership, neither do they concern us at this critical moment," the statement said.

Meanwhile, South African Foreign Minister P. W. Botha said Friday South Africa was losing patience with both the Angolan government and UNITA rebels and would not care even in the unlikely event of Cuba replying troops in Angola.

He against dismissed Angolan government allegations that South Africa was giving military assistance to UNITA.

Yeltsin, Khasbulatov exchange verbal jabs

MOSCOW (AP) — President Boris Yeltsin and his chief political rival, parliament speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov, stung each other with verbal punches reminiscent of Mr. Yeltsin's bitter feud with Mikhail Gorbachev.

Mr. Khasbulatov started the exchange of insults by telling the visiting Swedish prime minister that Mr. Yeltsin had "failed to cope with the duties" of president, according to Russian news reports.

The pipe-smoking Russian parliament leader added that Mr. Yeltsin was forcing the country into a divisive national referendum and "does not know how to deal with the situation."

The April 11 referendum will set the principles of a new Russian constitution and decide the balance of power between the executive branch of government, headed by Mr. Yeltsin, and the legislative branch, headed by Mr. Khasbulatov.

Mr. Khasbulatov's "arrogant" and "tactless" remarks displayed a "lack of control before the foreign guest," presidential spokesman Vyacheslav Kostikov said in a statement to the media.

The parliament speaker apparently "fails to realise that such statements humiliate Russia and abuse not only the president, but also Russian politics and the Russian people's dignity," Mr. Kostikov said.

The Swedish Prime Minister Karl Bildt, did not take sides in the dispute.

The exchange came as representatives of the parliament and Mr. Yeltsin's cabinet held round-table talks on how to improve the economy.

The parliament, dominated by former Communists elected before the Soviet Union's collapse, has pushed for a "softer" transition to a free market and more support for failing state industries.

It forced Mr. Yeltsin to jettison former acting Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar and replace him

with a veteran Communist-era manager, Viktor Chernomyrdin, late last year.

Mr. Khasbulatov's "surprise attack" during the round-table discussions shows he is a "two-faced" politician with a "dangerous inclination toward mean political intrigues," Mr. Kostikov said.

Mr. Yeltsin has not traded such harsh words with any political figure except Mr. Gorbachev, who drummed Mr. Yeltsin out of the politburo in 1988.

Mr. Yeltsin got his revenge in 1991, when Mr. Gorbachev resigned as Soviet president.

Mr. Gorbachev has since criticised Mr. Yeltsin's economic policies and warned that they were impoverishing the nation.

Mr. Yeltsin responded by taking away Mr. Gorbachev's limousine and forcing his think-tank, the Gorbachev Foundation, into a tiny portion of its former office space.

U.K. newspaper editors act on bugging

LONDON (Agencies) — Britain's newspaper editors said they have agreed to act on bugging for purposes of publication.

In a statement Friday, the committee said it has inserted a clause into the code instructing journalists not to obtain or publish material gained by using clandestine listening devices or by intercepting private telephone conversations.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister John Major has rejected an apology from a magazine that published rumours of an alleged extra-marital affair and is going ahead with a libel suit and demanding "substantial" damages.

The magazine, New Statesman and Society, reacted with disappointment to the news and repeated an offer to make "any further public statements vindicating the prime minister's reputation that he may require," a statement said.

"That offer has not yet been taken up, but it remains open," the left-leaning magazine added.

The spokesman for Mr. Major's solicitors, Biddle And Co., said the New Statesman's letter

to the prime minister, sent Monday and reprinted in this week's edition of the left-leaning magazine, did not go far enough to satisfy him.

"The litigation continues until the New Statesman and the other defendants take a realistic view of the matter," the spokesman said. He did not elaborate and Mr. Major's Downing Street office declined to add to or comment on the statement.

In a rare move for a prime minister, Mr. Major launched libel proceedings last week against the New Statesman and Sellywag, a monthly satirical magazine, for publishing accounts of rumours that he had had an affair with catering manager Clare Latimer, 41. Both have denied any impropriety and Ms. Latimer has also sued.

Sellywag editor Simon Regan said Mr. Major's lawyers had demanded "payment of a substantial sum as compensation to vindicate his reputation" in letter to the magazine.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

AIDS vaccine is in testing phase

MERIDEN, Conn. (AP) — A vaccine that has been shown in tests to spur an immune response against the AIDS virus is going through its first large-scale clinical trial in Sweden. The trial involves a vaccine called Vaxsyn, developed by Microgenetics Inc. The company announced the clinical trials. The study, which has started in Sweden, is the last hurdle that Microgenetics must clear before it can start commercial production of its vaccine. The medication would be used to treat people already infected with the AIDS virus. Microgenetics was the first to receive federal approval to test an AIDS vaccine on humans in 1987. Vaxsyn is currently being tested on about 1,500 people in the United States, Canada and Sweden. The vaccine has been shown in tests to spur an immune response against the AIDS virus and stop the loss of crucial CD4 white blood cells. The latest test will include 1,000 infected Swedes who have white blood cell counts that are lower than those in the current trials. It will be the first test that reveals whether Vaxsyn affects the course of the disease. The study is intended to last six years and eventually enroll patients from Denmark, Norway and Finland.

Pakistan court frees Bhutto's husband

KARACHI (R) — A Pakistan anti-terrorist court Saturday freed Asif Ali Zardari, husband of opposition leader Benazir Bhutto, after more than two years in jail without a conviction. "It is the people's victory," a delighted Zardari said in an interview. "It shows the cases against me were cooked up. There is no truth in the charges." "Long live Zardari," chanted about 500 supporters who danced, applauded and tossed garlands of red roses when Mr. Zardari walked out of the hospital where he has been treated for pain in the joints and flushed V for victory signs toward the crowd. Pakistan's most prominent political prisoner said he hoped to go to London to see his wife, the former prime minister, who gave birth to their third child — a daughter — Wednesday. The Karachi anti-terrorist court granted bail to Mr. Zardari on the last of 12 charges filed against him for alleged corruption during the 20 months when Ms. Bhutto was prime minister. Mr. Zardari has been acquitted on nine of the charges, including murder, and granted bail on two. His bail for the last charge, extortion, is a surety of 500,000 rupees (\$19,000) and the same amount in personal bonds, his lawyer Raja Qureshi said.

Clinton signs family leave bill

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bill Clinton signed the first bill of his 16-day-old presidency — major social legislation granting workers unpaid leave for family emergencies. Cheers and applause erupted from hundreds of supporters as Mr. Clinton signed the bill at a sun-filled ceremony in the White House Rose Garden. Democratic Party leaders said approval of the measure, twice vetoed by former President George Bush, symbolised the end of more than a decade of division between Congress and the White House. It opened the way for progress on stalled domestic legislation, they said. "It was America's families who have beaten the gridlock in Washington to pass family leave," Mr. Clinton said. He said the swift passage of the bill by Congress was a signal that "we have tried to give this government back to the American people." "Today marks the end of gridlock and a new beginning," Vice President Al Gore said at the televised ceremony. Mr. Clinton cited the Family Leave Bill as the first item on a list of social legislation he wants passed. "There is a lot more we need to do," he said, listing welfare reform, tougher child support enforcement, expanding the earned income tax credit and expanding child immunisation programmes.

Clinton may cancel space station

WASHINGTON (AP) — Early versions of the Clinton administration budget would cancel two of the United States' most expensive science projects — the \$30 billion space station Freedom and the \$8.2 billion superconducting supercollider, congressional sources said. President Bill Clinton called for further review of the projects, a congressional source said, after Budget Director Leon Panetta proposed that both the space station and the supercollider be cancelled. "The president was not comfortable with a budget that did not contain the station and sent it down for further review," the informant said. The sources talked on condition of not being named. Mr. Panetta proposed killing the two projects during a meeting with Clinton cabinet officials last weekend at Camp David. Plans call for the state of Texas to contribute about \$875 million towards the total cost of the supercollider and for some \$1.7 billion to come from foreign participants, including Russia, China, Japan and the European Community.

Clinton's 2nd choice for attorney general bows out

WASHINGTON (R) — New York Federal Judge Kimba Wood has withdrawn her name from consideration as U.S. attorney general, saying a babysitter she employed had technically been an illegal alien.

It was the second time since President Bill Clinton's term began that a potential occupant of the post as the top U.S. law enforcer has pulled out because of the discovery that she had hired an illegal alien.

At least this time Mr. Clinton found out about the problem before nominating Ms. Wood as his choice. Ms. Wood, 49, pulled out Friday night.

It was two weeks to the day after Connecticut corporate lawyer Zoe Baird, 40, had to withdraw her nomination as the first U.S. woman attorney general because she had hired a couple from Peru, in the country illegally, as household servants.

The public outcry over Ms. Baird's nomination created a political environment that made it impossible for anyone with a similar case to be considered for the job.

Ms. Wood insisted that she did not break the law, and did not have a "Zoe Baird" problem. "I did not and I do not," she said in a statement.

She hired the babysitter,



Judge Kimba Wood counsel Bernard Nussbaum asked her once. She said no all three times.

Her illegal alien case was discovered during scrutiny of her financial records Thursday night. Mr. Stephanopoulos said. Some newspapers were already reporting her as the likely nominee. Mr. Clinton said in a statement, "I understand and respect Judge Wood's decision not to proceed further with the possibility of being nominated as attorney general. I was greatly impressed with her as a lawyer, a judge and a person. I respect her legal talents, judicial record and integrity."

"I wish her well," he said. Ms. Wood's withdrawal cast a cloud over what had been an otherwise good week for the White House as it was able to keep the focus on improving the U.S. economy.

COLUMN

Paul McCartney launches 'new world tour'

LONDON (AP) — Paul McCartney launched an international concert tour with a spirited defence of his right to speak out on environmental and human rights issues, both close to his heart. "I don't really want this job, but I've got this attention from the media and I feel I've got to use it," the former Beatle told a news conference at the London Docklands Arena. "I feel people don't mind me being their voice in these things," he said, adding, "when governments sort (these issues) out, I'll stop." The "new world tour" is McCartney's first international tour since the "Get Back" concert series in 1989-90, which publicised the activities of the environmental group Friends Of The Earth. After four "showcase" concerts last month in Milan and Frankfurt, it officially opens on March 5 in Perth, Australia. The tour will move from there to the United States. Dates for this segment have not yet been announced. Concerts will include material from McCartney's latest album, Off The Ground, which was released Monday in Britain. It contains several gritty numbers protesting what the singer calls the "wrongs of the world." An ebullient McCartney, now 50, said Friday he was looking forward to recording one song with former Beatles Ringo Starr and George Harrison, but rejected reports that the 1960s hit group will reform.

Toilet-trained teenagers in brush with the law

BANGKOK (R) — Police have arrested a juvenile robbery gang who specialised in crawling through small squat toilet bowls into the houses of their victims. The five youngsters, aged between 13 and 14, snatched cess-pool tanks and squeezed through the ground-level toilet bowls of about 40 houses, police in Ayudhya, north of Bangkok, said. The determined robbers said they usually took long showers in the houses before making off with valuables. The boys were caught after they had spent lavishly on small remote-controlled race cars and toys.

N. Ireland killers to marry across sectarian divide

BELFAST (R) — Two convicted killers from opposite sides of the sectarian divide in Northern Ireland are to get married in prison next month. Roman Catholic Anna Moore, 46, is serving a life sentence for a pub bombing which killed 11 off-duty soldiers and six civilians in 1982. She is to marry Protestant Bobby Corry, 43, also serving life for murder after a 1972 pub bombing. Official sources said it will be the first "across the divide" marriage in the 23 years of political and sectarian conflict in Northern Ireland. The campaigns by the Irish Republican Army (IRA), fighting to end British rule in Northern Ireland, and Protestant extremists who want the province to stay part of Britain have claimed more than 3,000 lives. Ms. Moore and Mr. Corry first exchanged letters in Maghaberry Jail and then used up their quota of visiting days to meet each other. They plan to marry at a special service in the prison chapel but there will be no honeymoon. They will be returned to their separate cells to continue their sentences.

Polish police say altar-boys robbed priests, anglers

WARSAW (R) — Three Polish altar-boys have been charged by police with 39 cases of theft, mostly from priests and fishermen. Polish news agency (PAP) said. It quoted Wieslaw Dybas, police spokesman for the south-eastern town of Krosno, as saying a 13-year-old and two 13-year-olds robbed 12 priests and systematically broke into the cars of anglers on fishing trips to a local river. Dybas said police found an automatic rifle and large quantities of ammunition on the boys.

Irish censors ban Bad Lieutenant film

DUBLIN (AP) — Ireland's censors have banned an American film about a crooked cop, "Bad Lieutenant," starring Harvey Keitel and directed by Abel Ferrara, chafes the moral descent of a New York detective who abuses his position to feed his addictions to sex, drugs and gambling. Acclaimed by some critics, it features graphic violence and a masturbation scene.